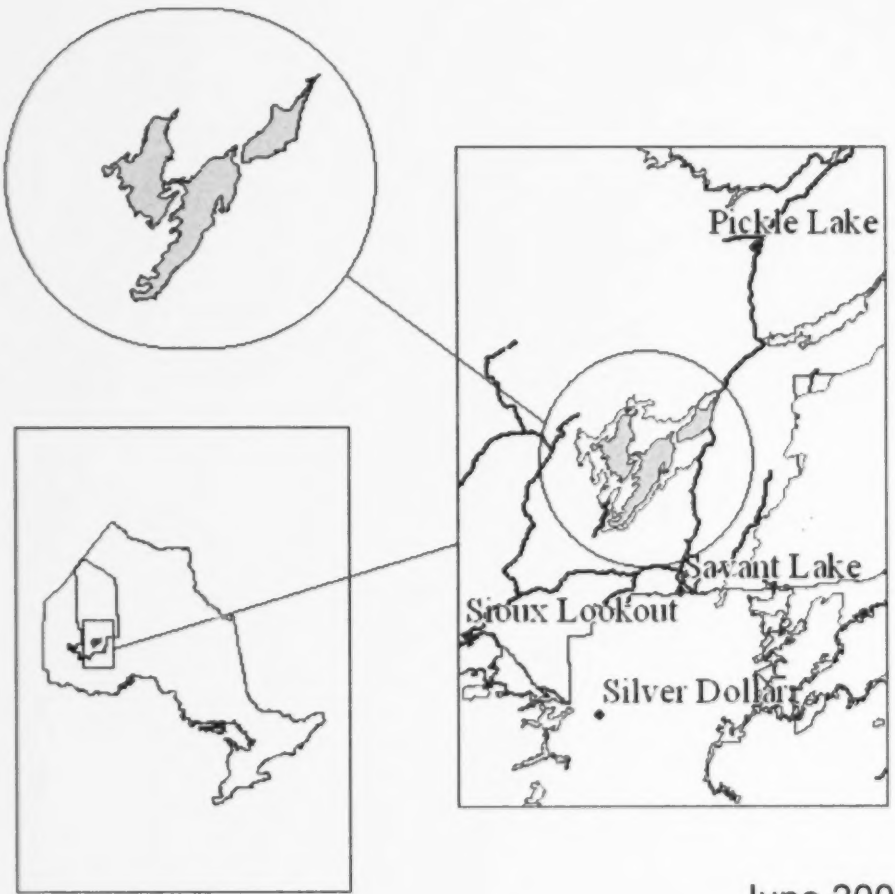
Miniss Enhanced Management Area
Resource Management Plan



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Approval Statement

We are pleased to approve the **Miniss Enhanced Management Area Resource Management Plan.**

This plan will direct land use and resource management decisions for the protection, planning and development of natural resources in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. Future resource management plans and decisions about the use of natural resources in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area will conform to the direction in this document.

The public, First Nations and affected stakeholders were consulted during the development of the Miniss Enhanced Management Area Resource Management Plan, and the Ministry will endeavor to keep interested parties informed as implementation proceeds.

Implementation of the Resource Management Plan will be the responsibility of the Sioux Lookout District, Ministry of Natural Resources.

Yours truly,

Allan Willcocks
Regional Director
Northwest Region
Ministry of Natural Resources

Bob David
District Manager
Sioux Lookout District
Ministry of Natural Resources

Statement of Environmental Values

In accordance with provisions outlined in the Environmental Bill of Rights, the Ministry of Natural Resources prepared a *Statement of Environmental Values*. It describes how the purposes of the Environmental Bill of Rights are to be considered whenever decisions are made which may significantly affect the environment.

The primary purpose of the Environmental Bill of Rights is "to protect, conserve and where reasonable, restore the integrity of the environment." Consistent with these principles, the Ministry of Natural Resources developed four objectives in its *Statement of Environmental Values*:

- to ensure the long-term health of ecosystems by protecting and conserving our valuable soil, aquatic resources, forest and wildlife resources as well as their biological foundations
- to ensure the continuing availability of natural resources for the long-term benefit of the people of Ontario, that is, to leave future generations a legacy of the natural wealth that we still enjoy today
- to protect natural heritage and biological features of provincial significance
- to protect human life, the resource base and physical property from the threats of forest fires, floods and erosion.

The ministry's *Statement of Environmental Values* has been considered in the development of this resource management plan for the Miniss Enhanced Management Area.

Our Sustainable Future

The strategic direction provided in the document *Our Sustainable Future* further guides activities of the Ministry of Natural Resources, and was also considered in the preparation of this *Miniss Enhanced Management Area Resource Management Plan*. *Our Sustainable Future* confirms the vision of a healthy environment through sustainable development as the overall long-term goal of the Ministry of Natural Resources. The ministry's mission is to manage resources in an ecologically sustainable way to ensure that they are available for the use and enjoyment of future generations. *Our Sustainable Future* also highlights the ministry's commitment to the conservation of biodiversity.

Biodiversity

Although the concept of protecting biodiversity is not new, the government of Ontario has emphasized the importance of managing for biodiversity across the landscape. A commitment to biodiversity has been made in *Protecting What Sustains Us: Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy*. The biodiversity strategy sets out a plan in which all Ontarians, communities and sectors of society can and must play an important role in protecting biodiversity. This resource management plan supports the goals in the biodiversity strategy, which are to "*protect the genetic, species and ecosystem diversity of Ontario*", and to "*use and develop the biological assets of Ontario sustainably, and capture benefits from such use for Ontarians.*" This plan also considers the main points of the biodiversity strategy. These include:

- engaging Ontarians (e.g., increasing awareness and strengthening education),
- promoting stewardship,
- working together,
- integrating biodiversity conservation into land use planning,
- prevention (e.g., reducing pollution, reducing invasive species introduction, and protecting species at risk and genetic diversity); and,
- improving understanding.

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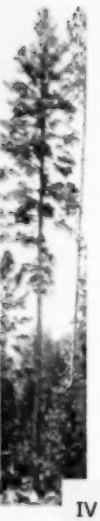


GOAL FOR

MINISS ENHANCED MANAGEMETN AREA

To carry out forest management and other commercial activities in a manner that maintains the remote characteristics of the Miniss Enhanced Management Area, manages for natural and cultural values, respects tourism activities and maintains traditional opportunities for remote recreational experiences."

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rationale for Planning

The Miniss Enhanced Management Area (EMA) was established through Ontario's Living Legacy (OLL) land use planning process and was categorized as a remote access EMA. EMAs were established to provide more detailed land use direction for areas with special features or values. Specifically, remote access EMAs are intended to maintain the remote character of an area while allowing for a variety of remote recreation and resource uses.

At the time it was established, there was little commercial development and no roads within the Miniss EMA making it a good candidate for a remote access enhanced management area. Enhanced resource management planning will support the maintenance of remote character, and will assist in conserving the adjacent park and other values, and promote the wise use of the areas' natural resources.

The Miniss EMA is part of St. Raphael Signature Site (signature site), also a product of OLL. A strategy was approved for the signature site in January 2007. The *St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy* instructed that resource management direction be developed for acceptable recreational uses, and for certain aspects of where, when and how commercial resource activities will be carried out in the Miniss EMA.

1.2. Plan Area

The Miniss Enhanced Management Area is located approximately 150 kilometrs northeast of the Municipality of Sioux Lookout. It is approximately 63,000 hectares in size and is divided into three parcels that are separated by portions of St. Raphael Provincial Park (see Map 1). The east parcel of the EMA abuts Highway 599 approximately half way between the Township of Pickle Lake and the hamlet of Savant Lake.

The Aboriginal communities of Mishkeegogamang First Nation and the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen are the closest communities to the Miniss EMA. Members of these communities have affirmed that the Miniss EMA overlaps some of their traditional use area. Aboriginal people use the EMA for trapping, hunting, fishing, medicinal plant collection and ceremonial purposes.

The geology of the EMA is largely influenced by its location on the Precambrian Canadian Shield. Soils in the area are shallow to moderately deep boulder tills on bedrock plains, with localized sand and gravel deposits associated with eskers and outwash fans. There are three faults in and adjacent to the EMA with associated mineral potential. Lakes and streams in the EMA connect to the circular waterways located in the adjacent St. Raphael Provincial Park. The lakes in the EMA provide limited back-country recreation opportunities and the level of use is thought to be low. Water bodies in the EMA can be accessed via Highway 599 (Payne Lake), via floatplane, and from canoe routes leading into and throughout St. Raphael Provincial Park.

The forests in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area are primarily black spruce and jack pine dominated conifer and mixed-wood stands. Uniform even-aged forests cover extensive areas. Timber in the Miniss EMA contributes to sustainable forest allocations within the Caribou Forest Management Unit.

The EMA provides habitat for wildlife species at risk such as forest-dwelling woodland caribou (woodland caribou; caribou). Also of special management consideration are bald eagle and osprey nests which have been observed in the EMA.

At the time the Miniss EMA was designated it was relatively undisturbed. Natural disturbances have included wildfire, insect infestations and localized wind-throw. The most notable wildfire was in 1996 which effected forests in the east and central EMA parcels. Human influences in the area included commercial resource harvesting trails and cabins, and a tourism outpost camp on Little Miniss Lake.

2.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

2.1. Relationship with other Land Use Strategies

The Miniss Enhanced Management Area was established in 1999. Strategic direction for the EMA was provided in the OLL Land Use Strategy (hereafter Land Use Strategy); this was the catalyst for EMA planning. The Land Use Strategy provided land use intent for each area-specific designation. For the Miniss EMA:

'The primary intent for this area is to carry out forest management activities in a manner that will recognize tourism activities consistent with policy. Forest access roads will be kept to a minimum, developed to the lowest standard possible, closed to public travel and physically abandoned when no longer required for forestry purposes. Forestry operations should be carried out in a manner that minimizes the number of areas under active operations at any one time.'

The Miniss Enhanced Management Area is part of St. Raphael Signature Site. A strategy for the signature site was completed in 2007 which built on land use intent and other strategic direction provided in the Land Use Strategy. The *St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy* (signature site strategy) provides land use direction and resource management strategies which guided the development of this resource management plan. The vision for St. Raphael Signature Site was used to develop resource management direction for St. Raphael Provincial Park (the park) and for the Miniss EMA. The vision for St. Raphael Signature Site is:

> ***'To preserve and protect the remote characteristics and unique values of St. Raphael Signature Site, while maintaining and balancing traditional, economic and recreational activities and opportunities.'***

Strategies to protect remote characteristics and other values in the EMA were provided in the signature site strategy. These have been expanded on in this resource management plan. The *Miniss Enhanced Management Area Resource Management Plan* recognizes the commitment made in the Land Use Strategy that there will be *'no impact on wood supply, and only in exceptional cases will wood costs be affected'* as a result of modifications to resource management practices in enhanced management areas.

2.2. Aboriginal Uses and Interests

The Miniss Enhanced Management Area overlaps the treaty area of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (Treaty #9) and the Anishinabek Nation (Treaty #3) people. Communities of the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen (Treaty #3) and Mishkeegogamang First Nation (Treaty #9) have affirmed that land encompassed by the Miniss EMA overlies their traditional use area. Aboriginal people have indicated they use the EMA for trapping, hunting, fishing, medicinal plant collection and ceremonial purposes. These activities can continue subject to public safety, conservation and other considerations.

Aboriginal people living close to the Miniss Enhanced Management Area have expressed concerns over forestry activities, primarily related to trapping and hunting success and the use/effects of herbicides.

Aboriginal participation in EMA resource management planning will continue to be encouraged so that Aboriginal interests may be communicated to MNR. The ministry will continue to work with Aboriginal communities to gain knowledge of areas of importance for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal communities will also continue to be invited to participate in forest management planning where operations may overlap Aboriginal traditional lands. MNR will continue to request input from Aboriginal communities when land use dispositions in their traditional areas are being considered.

There has been interest expressed by some Aboriginal people in economic opportunities related to resource management activities in the EMA. The sustainable forest licence holder and other resource proponents will seek continued discussions with Aboriginal communities regarding resource management activities in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. MNR will support personal and/or community-based enterprise in the EMA where compatible with the goal (see Section 3.1).

2.3. Other Factors

Forest management activities had been authorized in the Miniss EMA prior to the completion of this resource management plan[1]. Public concerns about forest management planning in absence of the completion of the formal planning for the area were forwarded to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) through two requests for individual environmental assessments (commonly referred to as "bump-up" requests).

There were four main themes of public concern for the EMA.

1) Although out of the scope of this planning exercise, there was public interest in amalgamating the EMA with the adjacent St. Raphael Provincial Park to make a larger wilderness area. Associated with this was continued concern regarding forestry and other heavy commercial operations (e.g., mining) in the EMA, and the impacts of timber harvesting and roads on tourism and wildlife habitat (e.g., caribou).

2) There was interest in a review of tourism use (e.g., fisheries capacity), and concerns expressed about tourism expansion and impacts on remote characteristics.

3) Comments provided by local residents included protection of canoe routes, the desire to have motorized use of roads and motorboat access to lakes in the EMA (and adjacent park).

4) Concerns regarding Aboriginal treaty rights and consultation were noted during signature site strategy development.

MOE ruled that an individual environmental assessment was not required; however, the Ministry of Natural Resources was to complete planning for the area and ensure forest management plans would be consistent with the planning direction prior to allowing forestry activities in the EMA. The St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy and the Miniss Enhanced Management Area Resource Management Plan fulfill MNR's responsibilities to MOE regarding these "bump-up" requests.

Not all concerns raised during signature site planning could be addressed in this EMA plan. Most of these were either out of the mandate of the planning exercise, or related solely to the management of the adjacent park. Those issues that were within the mandate of this project were considered in EMA planning. MNR is hopeful that interested parties will thoroughly review the EMA planning framework (sections 1.0 through 4.0) and the management direction (section 5.0) together.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This plan identifies the goal and objectives for the EMA which have been designed with the intent of maintaining remote character and conserving natural, cultural and recreational values in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. Activity-specific management direction has been developed based on the goal and objectives, and is detailed in Section 5.0: Natural Resource Uses and Management Direction (also see Figure 1 for Planning Overview).

[1]Operations in the EMA were approved in the 2002-2022 Caribou Forest Management Plan. Direction in the OLL Land Use Strategy was considered in planning of forestry operations in the EMA for the 2002 – 2022 plan through special provisions presented as 'area of concern' prescriptions and in road use management strategies. These prescriptions and strategies were considered during the development of this plan.

3.1. Goal

The goal for the EMA was developed from land use intent, strategic direction and commitments in the Land Use Strategy, and from the direction provided in the *St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy* (see Section 2.1: Relationship with other Land Use Strategies). It describes the future state and management regime that is desired for the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. This goal is:

> ***To carry out forest management and other commercial activities in a manner that maintains the remote characteristics of the Miniss Enhanced Management Area, manages for natural and cultural values, respects tourism activities and maintains traditional opportunities for remote recreational experiences.***

3.2. Plan Objectives

The goal for the Miniss EMA has been broken down into four objectives. These objectives will be achieved collectively through the development of integrated land use policies and management direction for commercial and recreational activities in the Miniss EMA.

Objective 1:	*To ensure remote characteristics as defined in this plan are maintained as resource and recreation activities continue and as new uses occur.*
Objective 2:	*To conserve the natural and cultural values in the EMA as resource activities are planned and carried out.*
Objective 3:	*To maintain traditional opportunities for remote tourism and individual (unassisted) recreational experiences in the EMA.*
Objective 4:	*To support the protection of recreational values including tourism in the adjacent St. Raphael Provincial Park.*

4.0 MINISS ENHANCED MANAGEMENT AREA VALUES

The Miniss Enhanced Management Area has important attributes. These attributes or values include remote character, unique and important natural features and cultural values.

It is the maintenance of remote character and the conservation of the natural and cultural values in the EMA that have driven the development of management direction for the area (see Section 5.0: Natural Resource Uses and Management Direction). The need to consider adjacent park values when assessing the effects of commercial activities and public access has also been identified, and fits with the greater signature site philosophy of integrated resource management planning.

4.1. Maintaining Remote Characteristics

The Land Use Strategy describes remote character as being the planning focus for remote access enhanced management areas. It further states that remote character (referred to as remote characteristics from hereon in this document) will be maintained primarily through establishing standards for the location, use and abandonment of roads and trails.

The signature site strategy defines remote characteristics as:

'...those attributes that contribute to a feeling of isolation from the outside world. A sense of remoteness can be enhanced if an individual has expended great effort to access an area and encounters few people. It can also be affected by visual disturbances, noise levels, evidence of human influences over the natural environment, and geographic location within the province.'

Remoteness and wilderness have been used interchangeably in resource management planning to define a natural environment with minimal to no human influence. The term wilderness is often used to define a natural condition for areas where protection of ecological values is the primary focus. Remoteness more often deals with the human element in terms of individuals having a 'remote' recreational experience.

This resource management plan focuses on the maintenance of remoteness from the perspective of the human experience, specifically the maintenance of remote recreational opportunities. Remote character will be retained primarily through establishing standards for the location, use or abandonment of (commercial) roads and trails.

Fully protecting the remoteness of an area can only be achieved by restricting commercial activities and limiting remote recreational use, an option that is not available or desirable in the EMA. Careful planning will help ensure that the areas' remote characteristics are maintained to an acceptable degree while still permitting a range of commercial activities and remote recreational uses.

Attributes of remoteness for the purposes of this plan were developed in order to better define and measure remote characteristics. These attributes are described in Table 1 and have been used to guide and assess land use policy and resource management direction in this document.

Table 1: Attributes of remoteness

Attribute	Description
Inaccessibility	• There are generally no roads. Trails may be present but are hard to locate and have a minimal footprint. • Access is generally by air or water. • Inaccessibility may also be influenced by the geography or geographic location of an area.
Visual aesthetics	• Areas of use or viewscapes (e.g., from outpost camps, recreation sites, canoe routes, etc.) are not affected by human influences on the landscape such as commercial operations and human-made structures. • Limited evidence of human activity from the air.
Lack of noise from human activities	• Areas are isolated or buffered from auditory disturbance from human use.
Low ease of travel	• An area is difficult to travel to and/or within. This factor is influenced by inaccessibility features.
Limited encounters with others	• One encounters few or no individuals during an outing. • This factor is closely tied to inaccessibility and may also be influenced by the type of experience or opportunity an individual seeks, and the amount and type of facilities an area has (e.g., back-country canoeists may avoid recreating on water bodies with developed shorelines and public boat launch areas).
No/limited evidence of human influence	• Recreational experiences are not negatively impacted by human influence (e.g., physical development, water siltation, repeatedly poor angling success, low incidence of wildlife sightings or sign, areas with a proliferation of invasive species).

4.2. Managing for Natural and Cultural Values

Natural and cultural values information for the EMA was compiled from a variety of sources. Much of this information was gathered during the development of the *St. Raphael Signature Site Background Document*. Supporting information was also retrieved from inventories, studies, communication with government staff, and from input provided by the planning team and an advisory committee during the development of the *St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy*.

The conservation of natural and cultural values is generally achieved through landscape (e.g., boreal forest) to local-level (e.g., site-specific) planning on most Crown lands in Ontario. In the Miniss EMA, these values include:

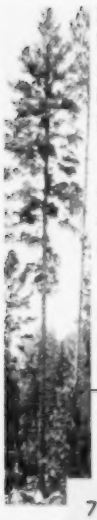
- Fisheries values
- Water Quality
- Vegetation
- Wildlife species at risk
- Cultural values
- Adjacent park values

This resource management plan does not provide direction for the conservation of natural values in the EMA. Rather, guidelines have been provided that compliment and enhance district, regional or provincial initiatives, programs, plans and other forms of direction (section 5.11). Provincial policies, guidelines and/or other forms of direction to manage for these values will continue to apply.

Fisheries Values

The Miniss Enhanced Management Area is in Fisheries Management Zone 4. Angling for sport fish (e.g., walleye and pike) generally occurs in larger lakes and is primarily associated with tourism operations. There are no commercial fishing operations in the EMA[2].

To support fisheries management in the EMA, lake survey data was analyzed by the Ministry of Natural Resources to estimate the annual sustainable fisheries production levels (through the use of provincially accepted models) for Payne, Taper and Little Miniss lakes. These results were compared with the fisheries capacity assigned to each lake and associated tourism camp. Results of modeling analysis indicated that the walleye fishery is at capacity on Taper Lake and Little Miniss Lake, with Payne Lake (which has no fisheries capacity assigned for tourism purposes) reporting limited capacity to support additional fish harvesting. Details of the modeling analysis were presented in the *St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document*.



Increased use of waterways in the EMA and the adjacent park (because of increased public awareness and use) may lead to increased fishing pressure from resident anglers and from guests using tourism establishments. Further, as remote back-country areas become less available with the expansion of commercial timber harvesting and the increasing interest in mineral exploration and extraction, areas being managed for remote characteristics such as the Miniss EMA (and adjacent park) may become a destination for increasing numbers of anglers.

Over-fishing and inadvertent live bait dumping have the potential to put native fish stocks at risk. Commercial activities, particularly road construction and use also have the potential to impact fisheries resources. Factors cited as being a concern for water quality (see Water Quality) may also impact fisheries in the EMA.

Fisheries resources are managed locally, regionally and provincially through management plans, guidelines and regulations. Provincial and federal legislative requirements for fisheries protection (e.g., the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act and the Federal Fisheries Act) must be adhered to.

[2]There are commercial bait harvest areas in the EMA. Details and resource management direction is described in Section 5.5 Bait Harvesting.

MNR may undertake a process (independent of EMA planning) to define fisheries management requirements in the Miniss EMA. This may lead to the development of a fisheries stewardship plan, or some other type of action plan which will adequately address identified issues and will support a sustainable fishery in the EMA.

Fisheries management in the EMA will be considered within the Fisheries Management Zone Strategy. Fisheries Management Zones focus on managing and monitoring at a broad landscape level as opposed to individual lake management and monitoring.

Fisheries protection will be supported by conditions developed for planning and development of roads and trails, and guidelines for activities associated with approved commercial uses at or near known fish-bearing streams and lakes. As a general principal, activities should be planned to avoid or minimize impacts on fish and fish habitat (e.g., minimize the number of water crossings to the greatest extent possible, minimize in-stream works, use spanned structures whenever possible, and incorporate adequate setbacks and vegetative buffers). It may be appropriate to conduct a site-specific fisheries habitat assessment where the installation of a culvert or other in-stream works is proposed. Guidelines are also available (e.g., *Timber Management Guidelines for the Protection of Fish Habitat*) and could be applied to activities other than forestry. Appropriate fisheries management prescriptions in local resource plans will be developed with the guidance of an MNR biologist or fisheries technical specialist. Strategies to protect fisheries in this plan may also support water quality conservation.

Water Quality

Water bodies in the Miniss EMA form part of the Albany Watershed. Many of the lakes in the EMA are relatively small and feed into larger water bodies in St. Raphael Provincial Park. Limited human influence on water bodies in the EMA suggests that water quality should be good compared with other cool water lakes in northwestern Ontario with higher levels of use.

Human activities can directly and indirectly affect water quality. Direct effects include physical disturbance to a water course, the introduction of pathogens as a result of improper disposal of human waste or pollutants such as oil and gasoline residue from boat motors and vehicles, and fuel spills. Indirect sources include increased sedimentation from erosion at times associated with soil and vegetation disturbances. Together, these impacts can cause changes to fish and riparian habitats, aquatic plant growth, nutrient levels and water chemistry.

Water quality is managed locally, regionally and provincially through management plans, guidelines and regulations. Legislative requirements for water quality protection (e.g., the Ontario Water Resources Act and the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act) must be followed.

Maintaining water quality will be a priority when making land use and water management decisions for the EMA. Protecting wetlands from disturbance will also be important as these natural filters contribute to healthy watersheds (see Vegetation).

Aquatic ecosystem health will be maintained through careful planning of land and resource uses (e.g., water crossings) in proximity to streams, lakes and recharge areas. Management direction pertaining to water quality contained in this plan is intended to support existing guidelines and mandatory requirements, and will also support fisheries management in the Miniss EMA. Retaining remote characteristics may also serve to protect water quality (e.g., limiting number and standards of roads).

Vegetation

Vegetation information collected in the *St. Raphael Signature Site Life Science Inventory* included types common to the boreal forest in northwestern Ontario. One sensitive and significant plant community included a patterned fen in the east parcel of the EMA, south of Payne Lake near Highway 599 (see Map 1). In addition, the Medcalf wetland complex located on the northern edge of the east EMA parcel is significant. Vegetation species considered provincially rare to locally significant were found in the neighbouring St. Raphael Provincial Park and may also occur in the EMA. Culturally important vegetation species and communities also likely exist. Shrubs and vegetative ground cover protect values such as water quality, erosion and wildlife habitat.

Although it is not possible to protect all vegetation in an area where resource harvesting (i.e., forestry) will occur, planning must factor in sensitive and important areas, and must have an end goal of re-establishing native vegetation to disturbed areas. Prompt action to re-establish vegetation in cleared areas no longer required for resource purposes and limiting the introduction of invasive species will be crucial elements in managing vegetation values. MNR will continue to encourage and support Aboriginal communities in providing traditional knowledge of important plant

collection areas to MNR so that these can be considered in resource management decision-making.

Wildlife

The Miniss Enhanced Management Area provides habitat for several species of large mammals including moose, woodland caribou, black bear and timber wolf. Other fur-bearers and small mammals also inhabit the EMA. Various bird species including raptors such as bald eagles and broad-winged hawks also use the EMA for breeding and nesting, although the extent of use by most species is not well documented.

Woodland caribou is a species at risk that uses the EMA. The EMA provides habitat suitable for wolverine, which is also a provincial species at risk.

Caribou surveys conducted from 2000 through to 2004 have shown that this species uses the EMA in the winter and to a lesser extent during snow-free conditions. While most of the EMA has suitable winter caribou habitat characteristics, animal sightings and sign (e.g., tracks and scat) have been concentrated in the southern half of the west EMA parcel, and in the northern portion of the central EMA parcel. Caribou habitat needs include areas beyond this EMA and Signature Site, thereby requiring a landscape-level of planning which is done through forest management planning.

Road development may have an impact on wildlife species by disturbing wildlife during important life stages, fragmenting habitat and creating travel corridors which may be used by predators, invasive species and people. Managing for remote characteristics, specifically with respect to roads (e.g., minimizing the number, standard and use of roads) will support wildlife management activities in the EMA.

The wildlife habitat needs and use of an area is geographically defined rather than bound by administrative units. MNR considers the EMA as part of the signature site and greater land-base. Landscape management for species such as woodland caribou will be included as part of habitat conservation planning for this species on the Caribou Forest and adjacent units to support an ecosystem-based management approach across the boreal landscape.

Wildlife management, including species at risk protection, is guided by legislation (e.g., Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, Endangered Species Act), provincial and regional guidelines (e.g., *Bald Eagle Habitat Management Guidelines*; *Forest Management Guidelines for the Conservation of Woodland Caribou)* and by strategies in recovery plans for species at risk. Local wildlife management practices are adaptive in nature and incorporate the most current information from wildlife surveys and other sources of local information.

Future resource management decisions will be based on the most accurate information on wildlife use that is available. MNR will continue to research and document wildlife use in the EMA, specifically for species at risk, in partnership with commercial users and Aboriginal communities where possible. Aboriginal communities will continue to be encouraged and supported in providing traditional knowledge of important wildlife use areas and species distribution for management planning purposes. This information will be considered in the development of forest management plans or other land use projects.

Cultural Values

Aboriginal cultural use information in the EMA has been recently documented. In 2001 and 2003, Aboriginal cultural values were recorded by the Mishkeegogamang First Nation community for use in signature site and forest management planning. The majority of identified cultural use sites are located along waterways, primarily in the neighbouring St. Raphael Provincial Park. The waterways were used as trade routes for furs and goods, freight routes to transport mine supplies, and to access trapping areas and homes. Predictive modeling information exists that highlights areas with high potential for cultural values. This information has been carefully considered by MNR during the development of this EMA resource management plan.

Cultural values have the potential to be impacted by resource development. There are information gaps, making identification and thus protection of these sites a challenge. However, by recognizing cultural values early in a planning process, the protection of important sites can be better accommodated and achieved. A wide variety of approaches can be used to conserve values that may be impacted by development. Generally speaking, any mechanism which leaves cultural values in-situ is considered superior to one whereby they are moved or removed from the original site. Cultural values are always best addressed if their location and significance is understood by the proponent and approval authority during the planning process.

Adjacent Park Values

Management direction for areas outside of this EMA is beyond the jurisdiction of this plan. However, the EMA is part of the greater St. Raphael Signature Site. Resource management planning must consider the implications of activities in the EMA that may have an impact on the greater signature site environment.

The Miniss EMA is almost entirely bordered by St. Raphael Provincial Park, a waterway class park. Waterway parks incorporate recreational water routes with representative natural features and historical resources, and are meant to provide high quality recreational and educational experiences. St. Raphael Provincial Park has remote back-country canoe routes and camping areas, and quality sport angling. It also contains important natural features such as habitat for woodland caribou, nesting sites for sandhill cranes, bald eagles and other bird species, significant wetlands and other important vegetation communities, some of which extend into the EMA.

St. Raphael Provincial Park has the potential to be affected by activities in the EMA. Consideration of adjacent park values will focus on limiting unplanned public access to the park, and conserving natural and recreational values. The *St. Raphael Provincial Park Management Plan* should be referenced during the preparation of local resource plans or land use applications for activities in the EMA.

5.0 NATURAL RESOURCE USES AND MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

Natural resource use and management direction in this plan has been carried forward or devised from higher-level direction provided in the *St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy*, and is intended to meet the goal and objectives for the Miniss EMA. The management focus is providing economic resource utilization opportunities (e.g., forestry and mining) while maintaining remote characteristics. As a remote access enhanced management area, the planning emphasis is access management (see Section 5.1). Direction for a variety of land uses is provided in Sections 5.2 through 5.10. Consideration for other EMA values has been provided where necessary to support the goal of the EMA (see Section 5.11). Provincial policies, guidelines and/or other forms of direction to manage for these resource values or uses will apply in the EMA where appropriate.

The management direction in this Miniss EMA resource management plan will guide activities in the plan area. The management direction must be considered and incorporated as appropriate into forest management plans (e.g., in road use management strategies through area of concern prescriptions, etc), and in other planning documents, project proposals and operational activities.

The Crown Land Use Policy Atlas policy report for the Miniss Enhanced Management Area will be amended to reflect the direction in this resource management plan. Activities in the EMA (e.g., forestry, fur harvesting, etc.) must be carried out consistent with the *Miniss Enhanced Management Area Resource Management Plan*.

In this section, established and potential activities in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area are summarized. Potential negative impacts on EMA values from these uses have also been detailed. Management direction is then presented.

Proponents should cross reference direction in all areas of resource management interest (e.g., the mining industry should review and incorporate mining, access and aggregate extraction directions during operational planning). They should further ensure that operational requirements are communicated to field staff.

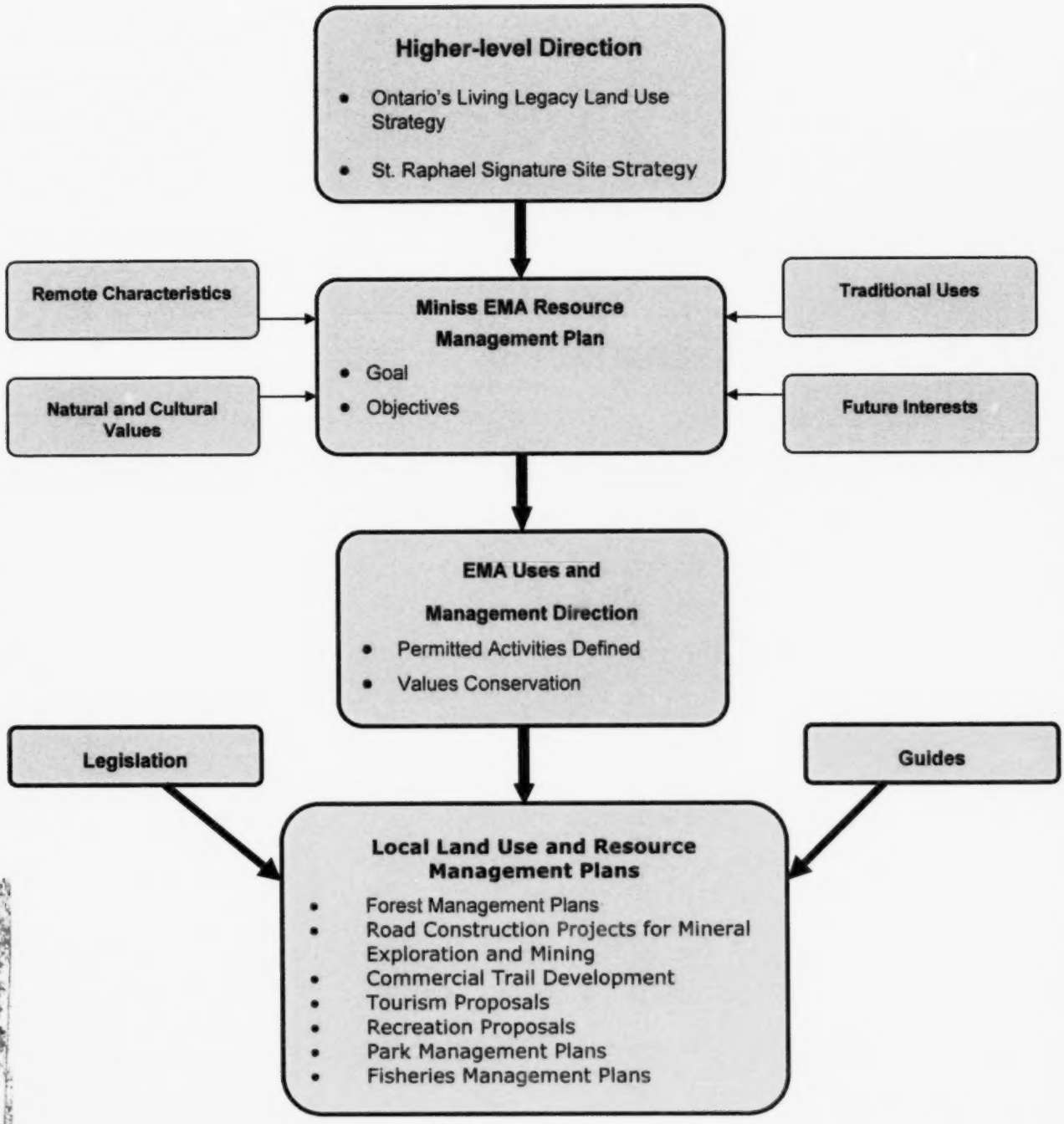


Figure 1: Planning Overview

5.1. Access (Land-based)

At the time the Miniss Enhanced Management Area was designated there were no roads on the landscape. Trails for recreational and commercial uses have been established over time and occur at low densities throughout the plan area, although there is no comprehensive trail inventory data. The forest industry requires road systems in the EMA to access their allocated forest license area. There may also be an interest to build or relocate trails to access other commercial resources and for recreational use.

Access management is the most critical element in achieving the plan's goal. Management direction focuses on the maintenance of remote characteristics mainly through minimizing impacts of roads and trails on the physical and visual landscape. This direction will support the conservation of other EMA values as well as recreation and other values in the adjacent park. Road use and management direction meets the intent for remote access enhanced management areas as described in the Land Use Strategy.

Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy Direction

The OLL Land Use Strategy states that authorized commercial and industrial users may access natural resources in the EMA. At the same time, the Land Use Strategy is clear that there is a responsibility to maintain remote character, and that impacts to other values (i.e., wilderness values) be given careful consideration when conducting commercial operations.

The Land Use Strategy did not specifically identify acceptable types of access development in the EMA. However, the intent was that industry must use access methods with the minimum amount of impact necessary to operate economically and safely. It was established in the Land Use Strategy that new roads in remote access type enhanced management areas are to be restricted from public use, but that existing authorized access may continue.

St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy Direction

The *St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy* directs that industry proponents are responsible for keeping roads to a minimum, following existing corridors where possible (e.g., mineral exploration and/or mining proponents plan and construct roads using old forestry road beds) and developing roads to a minimum standard in keeping with approved engineering practices. The signature site strategy further states that roads will be selectively deactivated and/or rehabilitated (e.g., portions of road corridors through the park) following the completion of resource management activities (e.g., after harvesting and renewal of a specific area, after mineral exploration and mining activities are complete). The design and construction of roads will facilitate effective access controls, road closures and rehabilitation, and must consider EMA and adjacent park values that may be affected by road development (e.g., designed to maintain remote characteristics). The signature site strategy further states that motorized use of roads will be permitted by authorized users only (e.g., to gain access to active forest harvest or renewal areas and staked mining claims), and to perform road maintenance and deactivation.

The signature site strategy described two access management approaches affecting adjacent lands. The first is that roads to the EMA through St. Raphael Provincial Park will only be permitted via three access corridors (see Map 1). That is to say that three authorized road corridors through the adjacent park are permitted where necessary for forestry, mineral exploration and mining to access resources in the EMA.

The second is that only one road crossing of the park from the general use area will be active at any one time, with rare exceptions such as access to mining claims that are not concurrent with forest operations, or in emergency response situations. The intent of this direction is to minimize disturbances to recreational park use by limiting areas under active forestry operations in the EMA, but not to preclude necessary work. Although management provisions which are specific to St. Raphael Provincial Park are outside the jurisdiction of this plan, resource managers should ensure consistency with access strategies.

Additional Direction

Requirements for access development must include, but are not limited to the direction outlined in this section. Other governing legislation (e.g., Fisheries Act, Navigable Waters Protection Act, Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act) should be reviewed to ensure access planning is in compliance. Where policies and guidelines exist (e.g., Forest Management Guidelines for the Protection of the Physical Environment, Environmental Guidelines for Access Roads and Water Crossings), or are developed (e.g., guidelines for the protection of species at risk in recovery plans) they should be used in combination with the management direction outlined in this plan. The *St. Raphael Provincial Park*

Management Plan, should also be consulted when a crossing of the park is required to ensure access policies therein are incorporated into operational access planning.

The following management direction has been separated into two parts: Access Roads and Trail Use and Development. The management direction for Access Roads has been subdivided under the headings: Road Use, Road Planning and Development, Access Controls and Road Decommissioning and Rehabilitation.

5.1.1 Access Roads – Management Direction

5.1.1.1. Road Use

- Construction of roads will only be permitted for forestry, mineral exploration and mining purposes (e.g., to gain access to active forest harvest or renewal areas, and staked mining claims).
- Motorized use of roads will be restricted to the forest, mineral exploration and mining industries, and government employees and their partners/agents to the extent necessary for efficient resource management, enforcement, and search and rescue efforts.
- Trappers may use roads only if hired to assist in road maintenance (i.e., to address flooding due to beaver activity).
- Authorized commercial users of roads cannot use roads for recreation purposes while carrying out resource management activities.
- Non-motorized use of roads such as travel on foot is permitted. Non-motorized assisted access means such as mountain biking and horse-back riding are permitted in the east EMA parcel only (see Map 1).
- New road applications must address the criteria in Road and Trail Application Information Requirements (Appendix A). Prescriptions will be included in forest road use management strategies and in work permit applications.

5.1.1.2. Road Planning and Development

- In general, all roads constructed in the EMA will be planned and built to the lowest standard possible (e.g., lower standard than those in the general use area). The running surface of primary roadbeds shall generally not exceed a width of 8 metres; non-permanent road running surfaces shall generally not exceed 6 metres in width. Exceptions may be necessary where safety considerations, terrain features, soil conditions or other environmental factors hamper operability and safety.
- The number and density of roads and related infrastructure (e.g., stream crossings, storage areas and turn-around areas) within the EMA is expected to be less than that for general use areas in the Sioux Lookout District. Proponents must demonstrate through planning how this direction has been considered. MNR recognizes that the standard will vary from location to location in response to safety, soil and other environmental conditions.
- Roads will be managed to restrict access to approved users and will be decommissioned when no longer required for the purposes of forest management, mineral exploration or mining. Proponents must demonstrate how design and construction of roads will facilitate effective access controls, road closures, decommissioning and rehabilitation (e.g., select water crossings which will create an impasse once the crossing structure is removed, plan portions of access routes through natural terrain features such as vertical bedrock outcrops which will serve effectively as access control points, salvage of topsoil for use in rehabilitation, etc.).
- Road and infrastructure impacts on viewscapes from established recreational use areas in the EMA and adjacent St. Raphael Provincial Park (including crossings of canoe route portages and from canoe routes) should be minimized. Important recreation areas may be determined through consultation with MNR staff, and by review and assessment of information provided by public interest groups and individuals during planning.
- Considerations for minimizing potential impacts on viewscapes may include selecting the least visible locations, reducing the extent of right-of-way clearing, and using materials that visually blend with surroundings when construction of bridges, guard rails, retaining walls, culverts, etc.

- Should a portage trail crossing be necessary, apply mitigation measures with the assistance of MNR (e.g., as outlined in the Canoe Route Direction for the 2008-2018 Caribou Forest Management Plan).

- Roads must be located as far as operationally possible from outpost camps and other tourism facilities. Setback distances will be determined on an individual basis through established processes (e.g., resource stewardship agreement framework) or other reasonable mitigation measures.

- Proponents must demonstrate through planning that road construction will be carried out with a focus on minimizing the loss of productive land from the forested land base. Considerations include:
  - limiting kilometres of roads constructed;
  - limiting the number of roads remaining after operations are complete;
  - minimizing road right-of-way widths to the greatest extent possible (e.g., < 20m);
  - planning roads to follow existing corridors and both natural and artificial clearings whenever possible (e.g., use of old forestry roadbeds for mining roads); and,
  - minimizing turn-around areas and other clearings associated with road construction or access, and locating these clearings in natural openings. As a general rule, turnarounds should not be closer than 400 metres from an adjacent clearing.

- Only one primary road will be permitted in each of the three EMA parcels. It is recognized that the forest industry will be the primary user of these roads. However, should it be necessary, the mineral exploration and mining industries are to use these primary roads to the greatest extent possible when accessing mineral exploration areas or mine sites.

- Primary roads will generally not be permitted within 500 metres of the St. Raphael Provincial Park boundary, except for those portions of roads entering the EMA from the park. Non-permanent roads will not be permitted within 200 metres of the park boundary. Exceptions may be considered where terrain, water features and/or park boundary configuration limit operability, or where access is required to a mining claim during mineral exploration or active mining operations.

- Non-permanent forestry roads connected to Highway 599 will also be permitted in the east parcel of the EMA to access forest harvest areas as operationally necessary (e.g., south of Payne Lake).

- Wherever possible, winter roads rather than all-season roads should be considered through planning. Winter-only opportunities for road development should be maximized.

- Use of roads for moving and using harvesting, wood processing and hauling equipment is generally not permitted from mid spring to late summer (e.g., May 15 to Labour Day). Timing windows for selective restricted uses may shift based on seasonal weather variations and other factors that have no affect on remote characteristics. Forestry proponents must incorporate timing windows into forest roads use strategies. Roads use requirements within the general timing window stated above must be presented and supported in the annual work schedule.

- Vehicle use associated with tree planting, seeding, data collection, access to mineral exploration or mine sites, and the movement of emergency response equipment will not be subject to timing restrictions.

- Vehicle use associated with access to mineral exploration or mine sites should avoid operations between the hours of 7pm and 7am from May 15 to Labour Day of each year.
- Where mining roads are required in advance of forest road construction, road alignment should be coordinated so that forestry proponents are able to use the same access corridor to the greatest extend possible. Dialogue between mining and forestry proponents will be essential.

- Loop roads are discouraged and will only be considered where there is a demonstrated need (e.g., for safety purposes).

- Forestry roads should be designed to maximize skid distance wherever possible. A skid distance of 250 metres or greater is desired.

- Where forest clearing is necessary outside of areas scheduled for harvest in the FMP, openings must blend with the natural surroundings (e.g., not angular), cleared only to an operable size, and rehabilitated (e.g., grubbed, seeded and/or planted) to re-establish ground cover once no longer required. Generally, smaller clearings are favourable to larger ones.

- Roads will be planned to avoid critical wildlife habitat such as mineral licks, wetlands and moose aquatic feeding areas.

- See Section 5.4: Aggregate Extraction for management direction on aggregate pits.

5.1.1.3. Access Controls

- Signage indicating public road use restrictions and/or access restrictions to St. Raphael Provincial Park waterways, and temporary access control measures (e.g., gate) on primary roads are required immediately after road construction commences in the EMA. Erecting signs and placing temporary access controls outside of the EMA (i.e., on primary roads in the general use area) may be an effective approach for limiting public access.

- Whenever operations cease for more than 12 hours (e.g., weekends; during spring break-up), entry points into the EMA must be physically blocked (e.g., gated) to prevent motorized traffic.

- If the use of primary access roads by the forest, mineral exploration or mining industry is not required for an extended period of time (e.g., 10 years), permanent barriers may need to be considered. A minimum of two types of access controls must be used to support each permanent entry control measure (e.g., water crossing removal, ditching and berming, gating, etc). Access controls that have low potential for entry violations (i.e., control measures that restrict motorized vehicle passage and/or use) are preferred. The type and placement of controls will be included as part of a road use management strategy or in a closure plan.

- Authorized road users will be encouraged to report known incidents of unauthorized access to MNR.

5.1.1.4. Road Decommissioning and Rehabilitation

- A level of decommissioning should be considered for all roads. The long term intent is to encourage active native vegetation growth during prolonged periods of inactivity. Where seed mixes are applied, they must be indigenous to this part of Ontario and free of noxious and annual weeds.

- Branch and operational roads will be decommissioned and road surfaces selectively rehabilitated as soon as feasible following the completion of operations (e.g., after harvesting and renewal of a specific area, after mineral exploration and mining activities are completed).

- In the east EMA parcel, special attention will be made to ensure that any roadway from Highway 599 is made physically impassable as close as practical to Highway 599.

- Plans for road decommissioning and/or rehabilitation will be provided in a road use management strategy or closure plan. In determining appropriate decommissioning strategies, primary considerations should be given to public access prevention, and conservation of natural and recreational (including tourism) values. Strategies will generally exceed those applied in the general use area. Strategies may include:
  - removal of water crossing structures and stabilization of banks or approaches
  - decompaction of travel surface and removal of portions of road-bed
  - seeding and tree planting on site prepared soil
  - placing stockpiled boulders and /or course woody debris at strategic locations
  - other rehabilitation efforts that will accelerate road renewal to a vegetated (preferably forested) condition.

5.1.2 Trail Use and Development - Management Direction

- The use of snowmobiles, ATVs or other motorized equipment is permitted on commercial trails for authorized purposes only (e.g., fur harvesting, bait harvesting operations and bear hunting services). Trails that have traditionally been used for commercial purposes will continue to be available for use unless environmental or other values are threatened.

- New trails for commercial purposes (i.e., mineral exploration, fur harvesting, bait resource harvesting and bear hunting services) will be permitted. Proposals for new trail construction under MNR jurisdiction must be accompanied by the Road and Trail Application Requirements (see Appendix C).

- New trails will be located and/or designed to minimize impacts on viewscapes from St. Raphael Provincial Park.

- New trails for remote recreation purposes will be reviewed individually. Generally, motorized remote recreational trails will not be permitted due to limitations of motorized access through St. Raphael Provincial Park and the intent to keep the plan area remote.

- Planning for new trails will consider the following:
  - The width of the cleared trail right-of-way will be kept to a minimum.
  - The use of fill and corduroy material will be minimized.
  - The need for rehabilitation of temporary trails.
  - The possibility of access controls where public access may be undesirable (e.g., trails to bait resources in east EMA parcel).
  - The avoidance of wetlands and other habitually wet areas.

- General public motorized use of commercial trails is not permitted. The commercial operator should communicate known incidents of public use of trails to MNR. Actions such as erecting signage indicating access restrictions may be necessary for communication and enforcement purposes.

- Unauthorized trails will be closed.

5.2. Forestry

Forest management on Crown land in Ontario is the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Miniss EMA contains over 45,000 hectares of productive forested land-base making it important for forest management. Approximately 82% of the EMA land-base consists of black spruce and jack pine dominated forests; a portion of the coniferous forest consists of mature even-aged stands over 70 years old. Forest management activities in provincial Crown forests are conducted to maintain healthy forest ecosystems, and provide continuous contributions to the provincial economy.

Administratively, the EMA is within the Caribou Forest Management Unit (FMU). Bowater Canadian Forest Products Inc. has held a Sustainable Forest Licence for this FMU since 1998, and is responsible for planning and conducting sustainable forestry operations in their license area. To date, there has been no commercial forest harvesting operations in the EMA[3].

Generally, management direction below will be formally considered through forest management planning by developing area of concern prescriptions (e.g., use of no cut zones or buffers) and forest road use management strategies for operations planned within or near known areas of importance (e.g., information in the Ontario Land Information Warehouse and cultural heritage information received from Aboriginal communities). MNR will be involved in, and in some cases will take the lead in developing these prescriptions and strategies.

The following management direction section has been divided into three subsections: Planning, Operations and Renewal.

[3]The 2002 – 2022 Caribou Forest Management Plan (FMP) included operations in the west parcel of the Miniss EMA. Prescriptions were developed and included in the FMP, which factored in land use intent for the EMA provided in the Land Use Strategy. These prescriptions were considered and some were carried forward in this resource management plan. No commercial forest harvesting can take place in the EMA until the final EMA plan is approved (see Section 2.3: Other Factors).

Forestry - Management Direction

Planning

- Harvest operations must be conducted in as timely a manner as possible, particularly in the west and central EMA parcels. Operations will be active in either the west or central EMA parcels at any one time. It is recognized that there might be a requirement to bridge forest operations between the west and central EMA parcels (e.g., road maintenance, silviculture, deactivation/decommissioning of roads).

- To minimize auditory and visual disturbance, timing restrictions for mechanical operations in the EMA (e.g., harvest and wood processing, mechanical site preparation and spacing) must be incorporated into forest management plans. Timing restrictions will generally be from mid spring through to late summer but may vary depending on seasonal weather variations. Site specific timing restrictions will be determined during the Forest Management Planning process. Other considerations may include:
  - tourism activities
  - woodland caribou calving
  - forest regeneration efforts
  - industry road construction

- Non-mechanical operations such as tree planting, seeding and data collection will be permitted year-round.

- Modified forestry operations will be required within the viewscape of St. Raphael Provincial Park (e.g., buffers, selective harvest). The intent is to provide site barriers or screens between campsites, portage trails and canoe routes in the park. Forest management plans must demonstrate that modified operations are adequate to protect park viewscapes.

- Forest operations should be modified within the viewscape of any known well used recreation site (e.g., Payne Lake portage trail). Sites brought forward during forest management planning will be assessed by MNR and mitigation measures will be applied as appropriate.

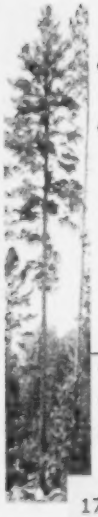
- A strategy for the protection of Crown canoe route values may be developed in the future. Although there are no major identified recreational canoe routes in the EMA, such a strategy will assist in providing a consistent approach to managing this recreation value in the Sioux Lookout District. Canoe Route Direction for the 2008 Caribou Forest Management Plan[4] may be used until a broader strategy is developed.

- The Resource Stewardship Agreement process is encouraged. Strategies to protect the interests of tourism operators will be included as area of concern prescriptions in forest management plans.

- Incorporate new information on rare, significant and sensitive vegetation species and communities as it becomes available.

- See Section 5.1: Access for direction about forest road and trail development and use.

- See Section 5.4: Aggregate Extraction for direction regarding category 14 sites.



[4] Canoe route direction within the Caribou Forest was first developed in 2001 to assist forest management planners in preparing the 2002-2022 Caribou Forest Management Plan. This direction document is being reviewed and will be revised during the preparation of the 2008-2018 Caribou Forest Management Plan.

Operations

- Where forest clearing (outside of harvest blocks) is necessary to support operations (e.g., turn-around areas and wood-processing areas), openings must blend with the natural surroundings (e.g., feathered edges rather than angular), cleared only to an operable size and rehabilitated (e.g., grubbed, seeded and/or planted) as soon as they are no longer required to re-establish ground cover. Where seed mixes are applied they must be indigenous to this part of Ontario and be free of noxious and annual weeds.

- Operational support equipment (e.g., portable garages, lunch trailers, garbage containers, parts trailers, etc.) can only be stored in the EMA during periods when operations are occurring and must be removed if operations cease for a period of 20 working days or more.

- Garbage must be removed from the EMA and taken to an approved waste disposal site.

- The establishment of over-night accommodations for forestry purposes will not be permitted in the EMA.

- In recognition of the irregular boundary of St. Raphael Provincial Park, forestry proponents must ensure the park boundary has been accurately located and marked prior to harvesting timber in area adjacent to the park. Proponents are encouraged to consult with MNR staff to reach agreement on the layout of harvesting operations occurring adjacent to the park boundary. The removal of flagging tape post-harvesting or the use of biodegradable ribbon is encouraged.

Renewal

- Forest renewal must be conducted as soon as possible after forest harvesting (e.g., commencement of renewal activities in a harvest area prior to an entire block being harvested). Use 'silviculture ground rules' which support early green-up for harvest blocks in the EMA where economically and ecologically feasible.

- Slash piles will be managed through the FMP and the subsequent Annual Work Schedule through a burn plan. Slash may be stored for longer periods for access controls or other demonstrated purpose.

- Aerial spraying operations must be carried out in a manner such that no spray drifts into St. Raphael Provincial Park. This is especially critical for operations adjacent to nature reserve zones. The forest management plan must demonstrate how this will be accomplished (i.e., in a Herbicide Spray Plan). Alternative methods of vegetation control close to the park boundary should be considered where feasible.

- Aboriginal communities in proximity to the EMA will be directly notified prior to the commencement of any herbicide spray program in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area.

- See Section 5.1.1: Access for direction on roads use and development.

- See Section 5.10.1: Fire Management for direction on prescribed burning.

5.3. Mineral Exploration and Mining

At the time it was established, the Miniss Enhanced Management Area had no mining claims, nor past mining activity. The EMA generally has low mineral potential based on information in the *St. Raphael Signature Site: Earth Science Inventory Report (2002)*. However, it has been speculated that there may be potential for rare-element pegmatites and diamonds in the EMA.

The Ministry of Natural Resources will review work permit applications for road construction and/or water crossings related to mineral exploration and mining activities, and mitigate where necessary to ensure impacts to EMA values are minimized (also see Section 5.1: Access). MNR will provide up-to-date values information to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to assist the mineral exploration and mining sectors in planning activities in the EMA.

In response to enhanced management requirements for the new EMA land use category, guidelines for (mineral) exploration activities in enhanced management areas (best practice guidelines) were developed by the Ministry of

Northern Development and Mines, in conjunction with the Ontario Prospectors Association and the Ministry of Natural Resources. The intent of these best practice guidelines is to encourage mineral exploration activities which promote the conservation of natural and recreational values in enhanced management areas. These best practice guidelines are in Appendix D. The Ministry of Natural Resources will support the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines in the facilitation, promotion and transfer of these best practice guidelines to the mineral exploration community.

Mineral Exploration and Mining – Management Direction

- Best practice guidelines will be used in conjunction with work permit conditions and approvals.
- Locate facilities (e.g., work camps) outside of the EMA unless a need can be conclusively demonstrated. Where facilities are required within the EMA, above ground facilities should be designed to minimize visibility (e.g., non-reflective surfaces, natural materials, and surface colours and patterns that blend with the immediate surroundings).
- Mineral exploration and mining proponents will be encouraged to minimize activities during the peak tourism and recreation season (e.g., May 15 to Labour Day).
- Rehabilitation activities that support early green-up strategies for mineral exploration, mine sites and related clearings are encouraged. Where seed mixes are applied, they must be indigenous to this part of Ontario and be free of noxious and annual weeds.
- Garbage must be removed from the EMA and taken to an approved waste disposal site.
- Advanced exploration and mining operations and related infrastructure should be located as far from the St. Raphael Provincial Park boundary as possible to reduce impacts (e.g., visual, noise) on recreational and tourism activities and facilities.
- Proponents are encouraged to consult with tourism operators, other commercial users and Aboriginal communities when planning operations in the EMA. These interests should be notified prior to conducting operations.
- See Section 5.1: Access for direction regarding road and trail development.

5.4. Aggregate Extraction

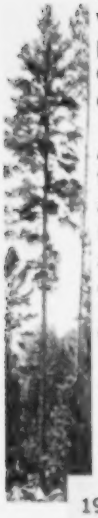
Prior to the Miniss Enhanced Management Area being designated, there had been no commercial aggregate extraction sites therein. There was incidental use of aggregates on a site along the eastern boundary of the EMA for the construction of Highway 599; however, this site is no longer in use.

Large-scale aggregate operations have the potential to have an impact on remote values through a large visual footprint, and long-term use and access requirements. Since ground disturbance is inherent with this activity, cultural values (should they exist) would likely be affected by any such ground excavation. There is also potential to create problems with invasive species if sites are not adequately rehabilitated. Water quality could be further affected by run-off from these clearings, particularly when sites are left over several seasons without erosion control or rehabilitation efforts.

Aggregate extraction is managed in a variety of ways. Use of this resource is generally considered and authorized through MNR's aggregate permitting process (i.e., category 1-15 sites). For the purposes of forest road construction, aggregate sites (category 14 sites) are managed through an approved forest management plan. For other operational industry needs in the EMA, (e.g., padding for mining claim, roads to mining claim), a site plan and category 9 aggregate permit application must be approved by MNR. The intent for this plan area is to allow necessary works to occur that conform to the goal and objectives for the EMA.

Aggregate Extraction – Management Direction

- Aggregate extraction for the purposes of sale is not permitted.
- Aggregate extraction will be permitted where essential for exploration and mining activities, and for industry road



construction and maintenance.

- Sources of aggregate outside of the EMA should be used to the greatest extent possible.

- Aggregate extraction sites should be directed to natural openings and former pits that still contain appropriate quality and quantity where possible. For example, an old aggregate site adjacent to Highway 599 could be reopened and used.

- Small aggregate extraction sites are preferable to large sites. Cleared areas should blend with the natural landscape (e.g., follow natural contours or forest stand boundaries, feathered edges rather than angular pit design).

- Should category 14 sites be necessary beyond the forest road construction phase (i.e., for road maintenance or other approved purpose), topsoil stockpiles will be seeded as soon as weather conditions are favourable for seeding. Seed or planting stock must be indigenous to this part of Ontario, and free of annual and noxious weeds.

- All aggregate extraction sites will be rehabilitated (e.g., sloped; grubbed, seeded and/or planted) when no longer required (i.e., the resource is exhausted). Green up will be facilitated as much as possible. Where seed mixes are applied, they must be indigenous to this part of Ontario and be free of noxious and annual weeds.

5.5. Bait Harvesting

Bait harvesting is a use which is expected to continue in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. There are 14 bait harvest areas which include water bodies in the EMA. Activities associated with bait harvesting generally have limited impacts on EMA values.

Bait harvesting operations are managed through provincial legislation and policies in cooperation with the Bait Association of Ontario. The intent for this plan area is that this use continues and that operations are planned and conducted in consideration of remote characteristics and other EMA values.

Bait Operations - Management Direction

- Commercial bait harvesting is permitted to continue in the EMA.

- Motorized use of authorized trails and traditional use of waterways to access bait harvest areas is permitted (see Section 5.1.2: Trail Use and Development - Management Direction). Motorized use of forestry, mineral exploration or mining roads is not permitted.

- The construction of cabins for commercial bait resource harvesting may be permitted if there is a demonstrated need. Such applications will be reviewed and authorized by the Ministry of Natural Resources as part of the land use permitting process.

- Boat caches for bait resource operations will be considered on an individual basis.

- When using float planes, pilots are encouraged to review and follow the Precautions to Avoid Spreading Aquatic Nuisance Species by Float Planes (www.invadingspecies.com/Prevention.cfm).

5.6. Fur Harvesting (Trapping)

Commercial fur harvesting (i.e., trapping) is an activity which is expected to continue in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. There are six active commercial trap-lines that encompass lands in the EMA. Activities associated with fur harvesting generally have limited impacts on EMA values.

Fur harvesting operations are managed through provincial legislation and policies, in cooperation with the Ontario Fur Managers Federation, Grand Council Treaty #3 (Anishinabek Nation) Trapping Harmonization Agreements and Treaty #9 (Nishnawbe-Aski Nation) Fur Harvesting Harmonization Agreement. The intent for this plan area is that this use continues, and that operations are planned and conducted in consideration of remote characteristics and other EMA

values.

Fur Harvesting - Management Direction

- Fur harvesting is permitted to continue.
- Active fur harvesting licence holders will have continued traditional access and use of the EMA. Established trails used to access trap-lines will be authorized, provided they are not causing negative environmental impacts or safety issues. Motorized use of forestry or mining roads is not permitted unless a trapper is hired to assist in road maintenance (i.e., to address flooding due to beaver activity).
- Trail relocation proposals will be subject to review by the MNR, and mitigated as necessary (see Section 5.1.2: Trail Use and Development - Management Direction).
- Construction of cabins will be subject to review by the Ministry of Natural Resources and mitigated as necessary.
- Boat caches for commercial fur harvesters will be considered on an individual basis.
- When using float planes, pilots are encouraged to review and follow the Precautions to Avoid Spreading Aquatic Nuisance Species by Float Planes (www.invadingspecies.com/Prevention.cfm).

5.7. Power Generation and Utilities

There are no energy generation facilities, nor any energy-related infrastructure within the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. The potential for waterpower production is very limited due to the uniform topography and no large river systems. The potential for commercial wind power development is also considered to be low relative to other areas in northwestern Ontario.

Corridors for new energy transmission (e.g., pipelines and hydro lines) or communication lines may be necessary to maintain essential public services to communities north of the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. For example, the Township of Pickle Lake has been examining the construction of a second hydroelectric power line to the town site from other power grids south of the community, possibly from Sioux Lookout or Ignace. There is also a radio tower in the east EMA parcel.

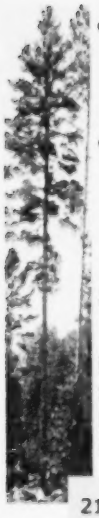
The province of Ontario is focused on wind, water and solar power as sources of renewable energy. The use of peat as a source of energy is also being investigated (see Section 5.10.2: Peat Extraction). Remote characteristics would likely be affected by large-scale energy projects which require establishment of long-term infrastructure including generating stations, transmission lines and access corridors.

Power Generation and Utilities Development - Management Direction

- Commercial water power, wind power and solar power development is not permitted in the EMA.
- Small-scale non-commercial renewable energy developments for tourism facilities on land use permits or Crown leases may be considered. Applications must demonstrate how a project maintains remote characteristics (e.g., location must consider aesthetics).
- Construction of utility corridors for energy transmission and communication lines is discouraged, but may be considered if no reasonable alternatives exist. Proponents should consider any power or utility line development along the Highway 599 corridor where possible. The Ministry of Natural Resources will review any such projects to ensure that developments in the EMA are mitigated where necessary to protect remote characteristics and other values.

5.8. Recreation

Due to limited accessibility, recreational use in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area is predominantly fly-in fishing through tourism establishments which utilize resources in the EMA. Canoe use in the EMA is thought to be low. Payne Lake is accessible from Highway 599 via a portage, and provides a level of opportunity and use for both angling and canoeing.



Prior to its establishment, the EMA had no authorized recreation trails. Snowmobile use in the EMA is incidental since there is limited access and few travel routes. Management direction for trail development and use is provided in Section 5.1.2: Trail Use and Development.

The intent for recreation in the EMA is to maintain remote recreational opportunities. This will largely be accomplished through careful access planning and forest management provisions designed to protect remote characteristics (see Section 5.1: Access). Entry into the EMA for recreational purposes will generally be limited to waterway access from St. Raphael Provincial Park, via floatplane and foot travel from the park or Highway 599.

A district-wide strategy for the protection of Crown canoe route values may be developed in the future. Although there are no major recreational canoe routes in the EMA, such a strategy will assist in providing a consistent approach to protecting this recreation value in the Sioux Lookout District.

A Fisheries Stewardship Plan may be developed in the future (see Section: 4.2.1: Fisheries Values). Any changes as a result of fisheries management planning will be included in the provincial fishing regulations.

Recreational Use and Development - Management Direction

- Crown land recreation activities (e.g., camping, hiking, canoeing, sport hunting and angling) are permitted to continue.
- Land disposition for private recreation purposes including recreation camps (i.e., cottages) and boat caches will not be permitted.
- Use of the portage trail from Highway 599 leading to Payne Lake may continue.
- Public motorized access on commercial resource trails (e.g., trap-line trails, bait block trails, mineral exploration trails) is not permitted. (See Section 5.1: Access for direction on road and trail use and development).
- Use of float planes to access lakes in the EMA may continue. Float plane pilots are encouraged to review and follow the Precautions to Avoid Spreading Aquatic Nuisance Species by Float Planes (www.invadingspecies.com/Prevention.cfm).

5.9. Tourism

The main draw for tourists to the Miniss EMA is sport fishing. Tourism activities may occur year-round; however, primary use occurs between the later part of May to September overlapping the open fishing season for walleye and pike. Ice fishing may also occur, however this use is more likely associated with resident anglers rather than from guests using tourism establishments. Hunting, largely for moose and black bear, also occurs to some extent in the fall.

At the time the Miniss EMA was established, one commercial outpost camp was in operation. Other tourism operators were also using resources in the EMA. No authorized boat caches associated with tourism camps or for private use are located in the EMA. Five active Bear Management Areas (BMAs) include lands in the EMA. No permanent infrastructure is associated with these BMAs; however, some tourism operators with BMA licences have facilities in the area surrounding the EMA.

Scenic landscapes are an important public resource. Tourism operators in the area have marketed their businesses as providing a remote experience for guests. Although sport fishing is the main tourism activity in this part of north-western Ontario there is also the potential to accommodate cultural and back-country tourism such as wildlife viewing, photography, hiking, horse-back riding and cross-country skiing. Where appropriate, enhanced land tenure may be considered for existing tourism operations in the EMA.

Tourism has the potential to impact fisheries, water quality, cultural values and remote characteristics. Ecologically sustainable resource-based tourism operations can continue in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. Authorized tourism operations will be permitted to continue, provided there is resource capacity to support these activities. Tourism operations will be inspected from time to time to ensure facilities are in conformity with EMA management direction.

As part of a fisheries management review, fisheries-based tourism operators that use lakes with low or decreasing fisheries capacity will be contacted to discuss fisheries issues, resource conservation and individual business logistics (see Section Fisheries Values). Sustainable fisheries management education will be a priority. Other resources to

assist tourism operators in educating guests may also be provided.

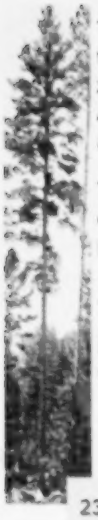
A Fisheries Stewardship Plan may be developed in the future (see Fisheries Values). Any changes to angling in the EMA as a result of fisheries management planning will be captured in the provincial fishing regulations.

Tourism Development - Management Direction

- The use of Bear Management Areas is permitted to continue.
- Facility expansion, upgrades or improvements must be designed to blend with the natural landscape, and should incorporate environmentally sensitive construction techniques and materials to the maximum extent possible.
- Use of renewable energy sources to operate tourism establishments is supported (see Section 5.7: Power Generation and Utilities).
- Crown land dispositions for new operations may be authorized if proposed activities are compatible with the management intent of the EMA. Non-consumptive activities, such as canoe guiding and cultural heritage appreciation are encouraged. Proposals for new operations must be supported by detailed resource information, and be included in a sound business plan which demonstrates direct and sustainable benefits to local communities, and provides a fair return to the Crown. Review of any proposal will be carried out at the district MNR office, and will include consultation with local stakeholders, Aboriginal communities and the general public.
- Motorized use of forestry or mining roads is not permitted.
- Tourism operators are encouraged to use the resource stewardship agreement process to ensure concerns considered in forest management.
- To ensure land uses remain compatible with the overall objectives for the EMA, land sales will not be considered.
- Commercial tourism boat caches will be considered on an individual basis, in consideration of demonstrated business needs.
- No further fisheries allocations for tourism purposes will be made available until fisheries capacity is confirmed.
- Use of floatplanes is permitted in the plan area. Float plane pilots should review and follow the Precautions to Avoid Spreading Aquatic Nuisance Species by Float Planes (www.invadingspecies.com/Prevention.cfm).

5.10. Other Resource Management Direction

5.10.1. Fire Management



The Miniss Enhanced Management Area is located in the Boreal Forest Management Fire Suppression Zone in which the protection of human life, property and natural resource values such as wood supply are priorities. Fires in this zone will generally receive a full fire suppression response. The Ontario fire program is administered through the Aviation and Forest Fire Management Branch of MNR. Response to wildfires in the EMA will be as described in the *Forest Fire Management Strategy for Ontario*.

The use of fire will be considered with respect for EMA and adjacent land values. Plans for prescribed burning will be developed in accordance with the Ministry of Natural Resources guidelines and environmental assessment requirements.

5.10.2 Peat Extraction

Prior to the establishment of the Miniss EMA, there had been no expressed interest in commercial peat extraction. Commercial peat extraction is incompatible with the objectives for the EMA and is not permitted.

5.10.3 Wild Rice Harvesting

Prior to the establishment of the Miniss EMA, there were no commercial wild rice harvesting operations occurring. Commercial wild rice harvesting is not permitted.

5.10.4 Commercial Fisheries

Prior to the establishment of the Miniss EMA, there were no commercial fishery operations occurring. Commercial fish harvesting is not permitted.

5.11. Additional Resource Management Guidelines

To minimize the potential impacts on natural and cultural values, the following guidelines should be considered by proponents and MNR when planning, reviewing and conducting activities. These do not replace existing legislation and guidelines.

Water Quality and Fisheries

- Roads and other development should be located well back from waterways.
- Cleared right-of-ways should be minimized within 100 metres of any known fish bearing stream crossing where operationally feasible.
- Development and site alteration will be restricted in or near sensitive surface and ground water features (e.g., patterned fen near Highway 599) such that hydrological functions are protected.
- Adequate vegetative buffers should be left adjacent to water courses. The protection of riparian areas will occur through forest management planning and conditions of approval for other activities through use of existing guidelines and site-specific prescriptions designed to protect large organic debris sources, ensure bank stability, protect water quality and maintain important wildlife habitat.
- Developments requiring vegetation clearing will be directed away from sites with evidence of or potential for erosion. Erosion management techniques will be planned and implemented. Should the techniques not be successful, remedial action will take place immediately.

Wildlife

- Plan aircraft and motorboat activity to minimize impacts on wildlife values. Consult *Bald Eagle Habitat Management Guidelines* and other guidelines and policies developed for the protection of natural values including species at risk. Seek advice from an MNR biologist or wildlife technical specialist.

Invasive Species Management

- Non-native species means species not native to Ontario as well as species native to Ontario but not to the EMA. Non-native species will not be deliberately introduced.
- Invasive species means species that are likely to spread and negatively affect native ecosystems.
- Vegetation in the signature site is generally native; few invasive or non-native species exist in the site, and those that do are limited to the areas that have been disturbed by development. These species include red top grass, common burdock, dandelion, and common plantain. These species are common pioneer species and act as an organic substrate for the re-establishment of native species over time.
- Where possible, action will be taken to eliminate or reduce the threat of invasive non-native species which may be affecting the diversity of naturally occurring populations. Should the presence of invasive non-native species become a threat to natural or cultural values, measures to deter and control the growth and spread may be defined and a program of control may be undertaken if feasible and practical.

- Species used for renewal will be native to the EMA area. Where grasses are necessary, only mixes approved by the MNR will be permitted.

Cultural Heritage Protection

- Any registered, designated or identified cultural heritage value (e.g., registered archaeological sites; sites affirmed by a cultural heritage specialist) will be protected from disturbance and damage to the greatest extent possible.

- In areas of cultural heritage interest (e.g., high-potential sites), provincial protocol (e.g., A Technical Guideline for Cultural Heritage Resources planned under EA-RSFD/EA-PPCR, Forest Management Guide for Cultural Heritage Values and/or input from a provincial cultural heritage specialist during forest management planning) will be used to conserve this value.
- Continue to gather and document cultural heritage values in the EMA.

- If local Aboriginal interests advise of site-specific areas with high heritage significance, affected/concerned parties should be consulted and appropriate mitigation applied.

6.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

6.1. Transition

Activities and operational plans must be consistent with the Miniss Enhanced Management Area Resource Management Plan (EMA plan). For example, forestry practices described in a forest management plan must incorporate the management direction contained within the document. While the EMA plan sets out practices for some activities to achieve the goal of the plan area, existing policy and guidelines developed for forest management and other activities on Crown lands will continue to apply.

Forestry interests have generally been involved in a substantive way during the development of the EMA plan (e.g., advice from members of the forest management planning team and signature site advisory committee) so a transition period following approval of the EMA plan should not be required. Forest management plans will have to be reviewed and may require amendments to be consistent with the EMA plan. Management direction for other interests (e.g., mining and tourism) will have to be incorporated into resource or area-specific management plans and application documents. MNR will assist clients in the planning of activities in the EMA so that they are consistent with the EMA resource management plan.

6.2. Completion of Action Items

In addition to the strategies that are implemented through operational plans, a number of issues have been identified that require further investigation after the completion of the EMA plan. Some of the items are largely technical in nature (e.g., continued caribou inventory work) and will be completed on a prioritized basis by MNR staff in consideration of available funding. Other plans will require partnerships and public consultation (e.g., fisheries stewardship planning) or will deal with new or emerging matters as they arise (e.g., recreational conflicts). The non-prioritized list of action items is as follows:

Inventory

- Collect trail information from existing users to support access management planning.

- Continue to collect wildlife use and landform vegetation information.

- Continue survey work to identify caribou calving sites, wintering areas and travel patterns.

Monitoring, Enforcement and Safety

- Enforce road and trail use restrictions and monitor access controls.

- Actively monitor water crossings and other potential point sources of pollution/sedimentation.
- Monitor caribou response to roads and forest operations.
- Inspect tourism operations to ensure facilities are in conformity with EMA plan direction.
- Close unauthorized trails; install access controls and conduct rehabilitation where necessary.

Partnerships

- Facilitate economic development opportunities for interested Aboriginal communities in the surrounding area where resources can support the proposed activity.
- Work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to locate, identify and document sites of traditional use significance.
- Seek not-for-profit partnerships with tourism operators, outdoor recreation groups and Aboriginal communities to assist with fisheries work.

Resource Management and Development

- Conduct a fisheries review; develop a Fisheries Stewardship Plan if necessary.
- Contact tourism operators that use lakes with low or decreasing fisheries capacity to discuss fisheries issues, resource conservation and individual business logistics.
- Examine the development of a district canoe route protection strategy.
- Add provisions to permit or lease renewals for tourism camps as necessary to ensure approved operations conform to direction in the final EMA plan.
- When available, integrate woodland caribou recovery strategies and wolverine management guidelines into local land use and resource management plans.

6.3. Plan Amendments

Circumstances may occur which could result in a plan amendment. An amendment to the plan may be requested at any time in writing to the MNR Sioux Lookout district manager. Requests that are approved will have a basis in fact, be related to the scope of the plan, and/or respond to changing resource conditions, new information, changing government policies or public need.

Requests for amendments will initially be reviewed by the Sioux Lookout district manager, and subject to the criteria described above, will be classified as administrative, minor or major.

Administrative amendments are assigned to document and implement a higher level government decision, correct minor errors or omissions or update information. Public consultation is not required for administrative amendments and approvals for this type of amendment will occur at the district manager level.

Minor amendments are those changes that have little or no negative effect on the public or adjacent landowners, no significant negative environmental, cultural or social-economic effects anticipated and involve minor alterations in land use intent. Approved minor amendments will not trigger a republishing of the plan. These amendments will be compiled and changes made if the plan is republished at a later date.

A major amendment is one where there is significant alteration in land use intent, a moderate to high expectation of public reaction and a moderate to significant environmental effect. Major amendments to the EMA Plan may also trigger an amendment to the Signature Site Strategy. Approved administrative, minor and major amendments may trigger a Crown Land Use Policy Atlas amendment.

Public consultation, including a posting on the EBR Registry, is required for all minor and major amendments. Additional public consultation efforts (e.g., open houses, newspaper ads, presentations) may be carried out if deemed

necessary or advantageous. A screening decision is made by the appropriate Director representing the originating/ custodian office. A joint screening decision will be required in some instances.

A major amendment may trigger a document republishing, particularly if the amendment results in significant changes to land use or resource management activities.

6.4 Monitoring, Plan Review and Adaptive Management

There is no intent to carry out a comprehensive review of the Miniss Enhanced Management Area Resource Management Plan at any prescribed interval. MNR will monitor activities within the EMA and will look periodically at amendments if required or requested. This will allow the ministry to monitor the effectiveness of the plan's direction (in its design and application) and will foster an adaptive management approach (i.e., "learning by doing") to EMA management.

Should a formal review of the Miniss Enhanced Management Area Resource Management Plan be carried out, a report will be produced which will include a summary of plan implementation and an assessment of how well the direction from the plan is being reflected in operations and on the achievement of the goal and objectives for the EMA. A summary of amendment requests, decisions and any further actions taken will also be included in the report. The report will be made available at the Sioux Lookout District office. Individuals on the EMA project mailing list will receive notification once a report has been completed.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Access Control: The purposeful placement of a temporary or permanent physical barrier or impediment (e.g., ditch, berm, gate, water crossing structure removal, roll back of boulders and/or course woody debris) that restricts public motorized use of a road.

Advanced Exploration: The excavation of an exploratory shaft, adit or decline, the extraction of prescribed material in excess of the prescribed quantity, whether the extraction involves the disturbance or movement of prescribed material located above or below the surface of the ground, the installation of a mill for test purposes or any other prescribed work (Source: Mining Act, R.S.O. 1990)

Aggregate: Aggregate includes gravel, sand, clay, earth, shale, stone, limestone, dolostone, sandstone, marble, granite, rock or other prescribed material. (Source: Aggregate Resources Act, R.S.O. 1990)

Area of Concern (AOC): A geographically defined area within a forestry block which is adjacent to an identified natural resource feature, land use or value that may be affected by forest management activities. (Adapted: Forest Management Planning Manual 2004)

Back-country: A generic term that refers to areas that are relatively unmodified, have minimal facilities to support recreational use, and are usually accessible only by foot, watercraft, aircraft or off-highway vehicle.

Bait Harvest Area: An area that has been licensed for the purposes of taking minnows and other bait species for commercial purposes.

Bear Management Area (BMA): An area of Crown land that is managed by a licensee (typically a tourism operator) for the purposes of sustainable non-resident harvesting of black bear, according to quotas and other requirements prescribed by the MNR. (Adapted: Algoma Headwaters Signature Site Strategy 2005)

Biodiversity: The variability among terrestrial and aquatic organisms, and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within a species, between species and of ecosystems. (Adapted: Protecting What Sustains Us – Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy 2005)

Boat Cache: A temporary or indeterminate storage site for watercraft (e.g., boats and canoes) adjacent to a water body. Boat caches in the EMA are administered as part of the Northwest Region Boat Cache program.

Branch or operational forestry roads: These are roads that are used for a short-term period (i.e., up to 15 years) and are not required for long-term functionality of forest harvest areas.

Closure Plan: A plan, developed for advanced exploration and mine production projects, which provides details and a financial bond to ensure restoration of mining lands to an acceptable and productive state, upon completion of exploration and mining activities. In the absence of special considerations, a closure plan requires the removal of infrastructure, such as roads and power grid, related to the project. (Adapted: Mining Act R.S.O. 1990)

Commercial (activity): An activity intended to draw revenue. (Source: St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Option Document 2004)

Crown Land Use Policy Atlas (CLUPA): A web-based summary of land use policy and selective resource management direction for the management of Crown land in most of central and northern Ontario. In time, CLUPA will be expanded to include more areas of the province.

Cultural Values: Any resource or feature of archaeological, historical or traditional use significance. This may include (terrestrial or underwater) archaeological resources, built heritage resources or cultural heritage landscapes. Cultural heritage values are usually identified by federal or provincial agencies, municipalities, municipal heritage committees or other equivalent local heritage groups, or local or regional Aboriginal band councils. The significance of a cultural heritage value is determined through an assessment by a qualified archaeologist or cultural heritage specialist. Values are contained within MNR's database and/or are locally identified sites that are deemed to have cultural heritage significance. (Adapted: A Class Environmental Assessment for MNR Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects 2003)

Decommission: The physical work that will be undertaken to render the road impassable to vehicular traffic, enhance public safety and reduce potential environmental damage (e.g., removal of a water crossing(s). (Adapted: Forest Management Planning Manual 2004)

Disposition: The granting of certain or all rights to Crown resources by the MNR, through such means as permits, licences, approvals, permissions, consents, land use permits, leases, licences of occupation, or sale. (Source: A Class Environmental Assessment for MNR Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects 2003)

Environmental Assessment (EA): A decision-making process used to promote good environmental planning by assessing the potential effects of certain activities on the environment. In Ontario, this process is defined in the Environmental Assessment Act. (Source: St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Option Document 2004)

Environmental Registry: A web-based system which provides the public with an opportunity to be informed of, and have input into, activities that may have impacts on the environment in Ontario. The Environmental Bill of Rights assures the basic environmental rights of Ontario residents and allows the decision-making process to be to subject to greater public scrutiny. (Source: Algoma Headwaters Signature Site Strategy 2005)

Fisheries Management Zone: An MNR administrative unit in which fisheries populations are regulated and managed. The zones (20 in total) are based on an ecological framework and support broad fisheries management planning.

Fisheries Stewardship Plan: Not unlike a fisheries management plan, a fisheries stewardship plan is a written document prepared for a specific geographic area (usually a provincial park) which outlines conservation, restoration and development of fisheries resources.

Forest Management Plan (FMP): A document prepared for a forest management unit in accordance with the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. An FMP contains pertinent information and prescriptions by which forest policy, aims, and objectives are translated into a continuous sequence of specific treatments on a management unit for a specified period of years. All forestry operations occurring in Ontario's public forests are directed by an FMP. (Adapted: Forest Management Planning Manual 2004)

General Use Area: Includes all Crown lands not placed into specific designations of EMA, provincial park, conservation reserve or forest reserve. (Adapted: St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Option Document 2004)

Green-up: A term given to an activity that revegetates a previously cleared area.

High Cultural Heritage Potential: Having a great likelihood of containing cultural values. The potential is based on the presence of a wide range of geographic and historical features which influenced past settlement. Cultural Heritage Resources Predictive Modeling (reviewed/confirmed by a cultural heritage specialist with the Ministry of Culture) is a tool that is often used to determine cultural heritage potential for an area where there is a resource management interest.

Industry: A productive or profit-making enterprise that has a large number of employees and dedicates considerable investment capital. (Source: St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document 2004)

Invasive Species: A species that does not normally occur in a specific area likely to cause environmental harm or displace native species. (Source: St. Raphael Signature Site Background Document 2004)

Land Use Permit (LUP): A permit issued under the Public Lands Act for the occupation of Crown land for a specific purpose; however, it does not convey any right or title to any resource.

Life Science Inventory: An inventory conducted to identify and describe representative vegetation types, special features, sites of interest, natural processes and human disturbances, and to catalogue flora and fauna. (Source: St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document 2004)

Loop Road: A road designed to provide one-way travel (entry and exit) from a forest harvest block. Generally these are non-permanent in nature.

Mining Claim: A parcel of land (including lands under water) that has been staked and recorded in accordance with the Mining Act and its regulations. The claim conveys only the exclusive right to explore for minerals within the area that has been staked. (Adapted: Algoma Headwaters Signature Site Strategy 2005)

Mitigation: The means by which projects can be modified to eliminate or minimize potential negative effects. (From: A Class Environmental Assessment for MNR Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects 2003)

Motorized Use: The use of a motor vehicle which is propelled or driven by means other than muscular power (e.g., mobile heavy equipment, truck, all-terrain vehicle and snowmobile). This definition does not include the use of aircraft or watercraft. (Source: St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document 2004)

Natural Resource Values Information System (NRVIS): A digital information system managed and maintained by the Ministry of Natural Resources. NRVIS provides the ability to use geographic data along with the corresponding attribute information. NRVIS is used to standardize the maintenance and storage of information. The system was designed primarily to support spatial data management for forest planning; however, its utility has expanded to house broader land-related information for a variety of purposes. Other government agencies also have access to and use NRVIS.

Natural Values: Features of the natural landscape in the EMA which are considered to be significant.

Non-permanent Road: Generally refers to branch or operational forestry roads and roads for advanced mineral exploration: These are roads that are used for a short-term period (i.e., up to 15 years) but are not required for long-term functionality of forest harvest areas or for mining purposes.

Prescribed Burn: The intentional application of fire to a specific land area to accomplish forest management or other land use objectives. (Adapted: Forest Management Planning Manual 2004)

Primary Road: Refers to a road that is for long-term use (i.e., throughout a life of a mining operation or for a forest harvest rotation) and may persist to access other areas for mineral exploration or mining purposes, and/or harvest areas during successive rotations. These roads will generally have a permanent roadbed.

Public Consultation: As part of a planning exercise, relevant information is provided to the public (e.g., through open houses, the Environmental Registry, newspaper releases and mailings), with the public being encouraged to provide input and participate in the decision-making process. (Source: Algoma Headwaters Signature Site Strategy 2005)

Rehabilitation: An area is restored to a condition of good health and is able to rapidly re-establish to natural conditions (e.g., to a forested condition).

Renewal (of a forest): The silvicultural operations undertaken to stimulate and promote the establishment and growth of desired future forest stands.

Renewable Energy: The generation of electrical power from an energy source that is renewed by natural processes including, but not limited to, wind, water, a biomass resource or product, or solar and geothermal energy.

Resource Stewardship Agreement (RSA): An agreement between two legal entities: a Resource Based Tourism Establishment licensee (RBT) as determined by the Ministry of Tourism, and a Sustainable Forest Licensee. In an RSA the two businesses discuss their respective values/concerns and agree on certain things like tourism values, forest management prescriptions and road use management strategies.

Riparian (area): An area adjacent to a stream, river, lake or wetland where there is an influence of water on the vegetation. These areas typically have a high density, diversity and productivity of plant species relative to nearby uplands, and provide important habitat for many wildlife species.

Road Closure: A road where some or all classes of motorized vehicles are not permitted for all or a portion of a year, as determined through planning. This usually includes the erection of signage under the authority of either the Public Lands Act or the Provincial Parks Act, which advises of public road closures or restrictions.

Significant and Rare Features: These are important natural features. The ranking of these features as significant or rare is determined through provincial protocol and through formal inventory and assessment.

Silviculture: A branch of forestry that deals with tending (thinning, pruning, etc.), harvesting, and renewal of a stand in order to produce a crop of timber and other forest products. (Adapted: Forest Management Planning Manual 2004)

Species at Risk: Any wild plant or animal threatened by, or vulnerable to extinction. In Ontario, species at risk are assigned one of four designations (i.e., special concern, threatened, endangered or extirpated) to represent the degree of imperilment within the province.

Sustainable Forest Licence (SFL): A 20-year renewable licence through which the licence holder becomes responsible for all aspects of forest management planning and renewal within standards set by the MNR. (Adapted: St. Raphael Signature Site Background Document 2004)

Traditional Aboriginal Knowledge: A knowledge that is held by and unique to Aboriginal people, adapted over time to reflect changes in the social, economic, environmental, spiritual and political spheres of Aboriginal communities. It often includes knowledge about the land and its resources, spiritual beliefs, language, mythology, culture, laws, customs and medicines.

Trails: Narrow linear corridors with natural surfaces (i.e., no fill material supporting the trail base). Trails are generally built for a specific purpose for short-term use (e.g., forestry skid trails, trails to access a mining claim), or for a longer period of time such as for some commercial and recreational uses (e.g., canoe portages and trails within bait harvest blocks).

Trap-line: An area of Crown lands and waters that is allocated to a registered trapper and is managed for the sustainability of fur-bearing animals, according to quotas assigned by the MNR. (Adapted: Algoma Headwaters Signature Site Strategy 2005)

Use Management Strategy: A statement outlining the purpose and description, and defining the roles and responsibilities related to use, maintenance, use control, abandonment and monitoring of roads on Crown land. (Source: Forest Management Planning Manual 2004)

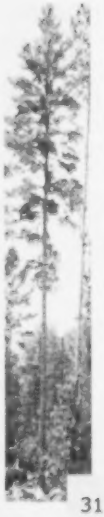
Value: A term used to describe known natural resource features and important land uses which may be affected by resource management activities. (Adapted: Forest Management Planning Manual 2004)

Viewscape: A visually sensitive area or scenic landscape identified through planning. The area is sensitive to a specified activity or the remnants of an activity can be observed (e.g., evidence of forest harvesting or road construction that can be seen from a canoe route).

Visual Quality Modeling: A computer generated modeling tool designed to assess the level of visual impact from a viewpoint based on the physical characteristics of an area.

Watershed: An area of land that collects and discharges water into a single main stream through a series of smaller tributaries.

Work Permit: A permit issued under Ontario Regulation 453/96 made under the Public Lands Act. A work permit is not a form of land use occupational authority. Work permits could be granted for proposals such as shore land related improvements, trap cabins, boathouses, roads and trails.



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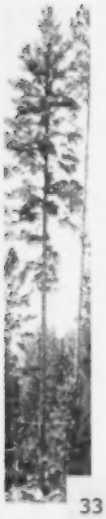


APPENDIX A: PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

Although not formally under development until the later part of 2005, resource management planning for the Miniss Enhanced Management Area has been underway since the beginning of the St. Raphael Signature Site project. A focused effort has provided a text document; however, idea generation and decision making have been occurring over the course of the entire St. Raphael planning exercise and has contributed to the development of this plan. Advisors with representation from a variety of interests reviewed and provided valuable input into the content of this resource management plan.

The planning participants listed below contributed to physical development of this plan. The *St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy* has a comprehensive list of planning participants for this project.

EMA Project Team	**Role in EMA Plan Development**
Ramona Szyska	Plan Author
Jeri Graham	Wildlife and Fisheries Advisor
Mike Pettit	Forestry Advisor
Evan Simpson	Regional Planning Advisor
Jamie Hilbert	Parks Advisor/ Planning Assistant
Kim Thrift	Planning Assistant
Sarah Stortz	Planning Assistant
Magdalena Kowalczyk	Planning Assistant

Many other people provided advice to the Ontario government which has assisted in the development of this Miniss Enhanced Management Area Resource Management Plan. This guidance is gratefully acknowledged.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR SIGNATURE SITE PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Although formal development for the Miniss EMA plan did not begin until the later part of 2005, information was being collected and compiled since the onset of planning for St. Raphael Signature Site.

Within this Appendix, consultation efforts and public input related to each public review period has been summarized below and was recorded in stages (1 – 6). All comments received during planning for St. Raphael Signature Site were considered in the development of this plan. Some concerns were raised that were outside of the mandate of EMA planning.

Stage 1 and 2: Invitation to Participate and to Inspect the Approved Terms of Reference

Public invitation and inspection period: March 26 to May 4, 2003

March 2 - 5, 2003: Advertisements requesting participation in the signature site planning process were provided in the Dryden Observer, the Chronicle Journal (Thunder Bay), the Ignace Driftwood, the Sioux Lookout Bulletin and the Wawatay News (with Oji-Cree Translation).

March 25, 2003: A proposal notice was posted on the Environmental Registry. The terms of reference was also posted on the internet at this same time.

April 10, 2003: An invitation to participate was provided to 336 interested parties, including Aboriginal communities, interest groups, stakeholders and members of the public. Each invitation package included a map of the signature site, an executive summary of the terms of reference, and a letter from the information management supervisor outlining the planning process and schedule.

Summary of comments received during review period:

- concerns included loss of wildlife habitat in the EMA due to forestry activities, and that the size of the buffer zone around the park was too small
- harvesting and roads in the EMA are inappropriate
- issues regarding treaty rights and Mishkeegogamang's involvement in the planning and management of the signature site
- Mishkeegogamang expressed interest in pursuing economic opportunities within the signature site

Stage 3: Signature Site Background Information

Public review period: January 28 to March 13, 2004

January 14, 2004: A newspaper announcement was placed in the Sioux Lookout Bulletin.

January 15, 2004: A newspaper announcement was placed in the Wawatay News.

January 15, 2004: *Get Involved!* postcards were sent to individuals on the project mailing list, outlining dates and locations of the open houses.

January 20 – 22, 2004: Open houses were held in Mishkeegogamang First Nation, Pickle Lake, Sioux Lookout and Savant Lake to present the *St. Raphael Signature Site Background Document*.

January 27, 2004: Packages were mailed to 349 interested parties. Each package included one *St. Raphael Signature Site Background Document* and a letter from the Information Management Supervisor indicating that comments on this document would be accepted until March 13, 2004.

January 28, 2004: A proposal notice was posted on the Environmental Registry. The background document and an executive summary were also posted on the internet. The executive summary was provided in English, French and Ojibway.

January 27 – 29, 2004: Signature site planning workshops were held in Mishkeegogamang First Nation, Pickle Lake, Sioux Lookout and Savant Lake.

Summary of comments received during review period:

- EMA should be reclassified as a wilderness or recreation area
- logging within the signature site should not be allowed
- roads are a major concern to the tourism industry
- increased access will jeopardize remote character
- limiting public access will result in decreased economic benefits for local area
- concerns about the success of access restriction measures
- concerns that limits on air traffic will negatively impact existing fly in tourism
- conflicting views on future development of ATV trails
- caribou habitat will be destroyed by logging activities in the EMA
- green corridors should be developed between St. Raphael and Wabakimi provincial parks
- concern about apparent over-allocation of fishery on some lakes
- concerns regarding bed-capacity management
- park boundaries should be expanded to provide adequate protection for caribou
- critical caribou calving sites in the EMA should be included in the park
- issues related to harvesting, use and possession of bait-fish
- Mishkeegogamang First Nation requested changes be made to the planning process
- cultural site protection is important
- Aboriginal communities are interested in projects that would benefit the area and residents
- the Mishkeegogamang community had a commercial fishing licence on St. Raphael Lake 30 years ago and are not clear why it was taken away

Stage 4: Signature Site Issues and Options

Public review period: November 26, 2004 to January 10, 2005.

November 15, 2004: A display board promoting the signature site and open houses was placed in the Sioux Lookout Public Library until mid-January 2005.

November 16, 2004: *Get Involved*! postcards were mailed to 350 individuals on the project mailing list, outlining open house dates and locations.

November 17, 2004: A flyer outlining open house details was delivered to all post office boxes in Pickle Lake, Savant Lake and Mishkeegogamang First Nation.

November 17, 2004: Newspaper advertisements announcing the release of the *St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document* were placed in the Sioux Lookout Bulletin and the Ignace Driftwood.

November 18, 2004: A newspaper advertisement announcing the release of the *St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document* was placed in the Wawatay News.

November 24, 2004: A second newspaper advertisement announcing the release of the document was placed in the Sioux Lookout Bulletin.

November 25, 2004: The issues and options document was posted on the internet.

November 26, 2004: A proposal notice was posted on the Environmental Registry.

November 29, 2004: Information packages for this stage were sent to 350 interested parties on the project mailing list. The package included one *St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document*, and a letter from the information management supervisor indicating that public comment on the document would be accepted until January 10, 2004. The letter also provided a link to the Environmental Registry posting.

December 1 – 3, 2004: Open houses were held in Mishkeegogamang First Nation, Pickle Lake, Savant Lake and Sioux Lookout.

December 7 and 9, 2004: A second set of open houses were held in the aforementioned communities.

Summary of comments received during review period:

- logging should not be allowed
- it is a remote wilderness area and it should be kept that way
- access to the area for the public should not be increased
- limiting public access will result in decreased economic benefits for the local area
- access restrictions don't work
- woodland caribou habitat will be destroyed by logging activities in the EMA
- signature site should be left as a remote roadless area
- concern over ATV and snowmobile use on logging roads
- disturbance of forest cover will contribute to a shift in bird species
- establish green corridors to link protected areas and sustain healthy wildlife
- expansion of tourism lodges within the park/EMA should be limited
- new tourism lodges should be placed outside the park/EMA
- roads within the park/EMA should be restored
- failure to recognize that ecological integrity should be the first priority in provincial parks
- motorboat use should be limited
- should determine how to best buffer the site from impacts of activities outside its boundary
- desire for additional road crossings of the park (i.e., to access forestry blocks to the north of the signature site)
- should be no major development in the signature site
- provincial importance of the signature site has not been taken into account in planning
- boundary issues presented at earlier stages were ignored
- road development and logging will threaten cultural, historical and recreational sites
- a comprehensive study of cultural and historical sites in the signature site should be completed before any development occurs

- access points for the public to enter the park for canoeing and camping should be developed
- land/water-based access to the park from the west and south suitable for motorboat use should be developed
- the objectives are inconsistent with the land use strategy and could result in additional constraints on industry
- aerial spraying is a concern

On January 10, 2005, the final day of the public review period, a peaceful First Nation protest rally was held outside the Sioux Lookout MNR District Office. Comments included:

- the process is flawed
- (there was) no consultation
- concerns about forest harvesting
- decisions affecting their trap lines and treaty area were made without their input
- accusations of polluting water, chasing away wildlife, and killing fish
- accusations of not listening to First Nation views or interests,
- MNR is working with multi-national corporations.
- advised that MNR would be receiving direction to stop the signature site, from an Ojibway Nation of Saugeen band lawyer

Stage 5: Preliminary Strategy and Park Issues and Options

Public review period: November 22, 2005 to January 6, 2006

November 17, 2005: A letter was sent to those individuals who had been members of the St. Raphael Signature Site Advisory Committee (whose term expired in March 2005) advising of the upcoming public comment period, providing thanks for their input to date, and encouraging them to review planning documents.

November 21, 2005: A letter was mailed to the 365 interested parties on the project mailing list. The letter included the following information: a brief description of the *St. Raphael Signature Site Preliminary Strategy* and *St. Raphael Provincial Park Management Issues and Options* documents, information on how to view/request copies of the documents, open house dates, and notification about the public comment period. In addition to the letter, a *Get Involved!* postcard was inserted which provided open house dates and locations, and options for viewing planning documents.

November 22, 2005: A proposal notice was posted on the Environmental Registry. The planning documents were also made available on the internet.

November 23, 2005: A letter was sent to Mishkeegogamang First Nation and to the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen informing of the release of planning documents and the associated public comment period and open houses. The letter also offered to arrange a meeting with each respective community to discuss signature site planning.

November 30, 2005: An announcement for the public review period and open houses was placed in the Sioux Lookout Bulletin.

December 1, 2005: An announcement for the public review period and open houses was placed in the Wawatay News.

December 1, 2005: A display board to promote the signature site and open houses was placed in the Sioux Lookout Public Library until approximately January 6, 2006.

December 2, 2005: Advertisements similar to those in the newspapers were delivered to 276 mailboxes in Pickle Lake and 82 mailboxes in Savant Lake. Copies of the *St. Raphael Signature Site Preliminary Strategy* and the *St. Raphael Provincial Park Management Issues and Options* document were sent to the advisory committee members.

December 5, 2005: Advertisements were delivered to 2059 mailboxes in Sioux Lookout and 300 mailboxes in Hudson.

December 6, 2005: Community announcements for open houses were faxed to the Mishkeegogamang radio station and CBLS/CBQW community radio (Sioux Lookout).

December 6 – 8, 2005: Open houses were held in Pickle Lake, Savant Lake, and Sioux Lookout.

December 13, 2005: Copies of a guide created to inform community members about St. Raphael Signature Site was sent to Mishkeegogamang First Nation and the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen. The *St. Raphael Signature Site and Aboriginal Communities: an Information Guide* was provided in both English and Ojibway.

Summary of comments received during review period:

- ecological integrity is not being protected
- there is not enough protection of woodland caribou
- woodland caribou protection is not compatible with forestry and road building
- more is required to protect biodiversity and species at risk in signature site
- various concerns around fisheries management and inventories
- public comments from previous stages have not been incorporated in planning documents
- comments for and against motorboat and horsepower restrictions
- trails for off-road motorcycle and vehicle use should remain open
- remote access should be maintained to protect remote tourism and recreation values
- how will forestry be managed differently in the EMA
- logging should not occur in the EMA
- how will remote character be maintained with forestry and road access
- concerns about trapping restrictions in the park
- concerns about the ability of Aboriginals to continue with traditional activities
- signature site strategy objectives are contradictory
- bait fishing should be phased out of the park
- questions around compliance and monitoring of access
- park restrictions only benefit a small group (e.g., tourism operators, canoeists, non-residents)
- commercial fishing should not be permitted
- forestry direction should not be prescriptive
- the canoe route information needs to be consistent with forest management planning maps
- recreational use of the park by local residents should be allowed to continue

- proposed park restrictions will have negative impacts on tourism businesses

Stage 6: Approved Strategy and Preliminary Miniss EMA Plan

Public review period: March 6, 2007 to April 20, 2007

January 17, 2007: A letter was sent to the Chief of Mishkeegogamang First Nation and the Chief of the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen the letter offered to arrange an information centre in their communities.

February 19, 2007: a letter was sent to those individuals who had been members of the St. Raphael Signature Site Advisory Committee (whose term expired in March 2005) advising of the upcoming public comment period, providing thanks for their input to date, and encouraging them to review planning documents.

February 19, 2007: A letter was mailed to the 351 interested parties on the project mailing list. The letter included the following information: a brief description of the *St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy* and the *Miniss Enhanced Management Area Preliminary Resource Management Plan* documents, information on how to view/request copies of the documents, information centre dates, and notification about the public comment period.

March 6, 2007: A proposal notice was posted on the Environmental Registry. The planning documents were also made available on the internet.

February 21, 2007: An announcement for the public review period and information centres was placed in the Sioux Lookout Bulletin.

February 28, 2007: An announcement for the public review period and information centres was placed in the Sioux Lookout Bulletin.

February 22, 2007: An announcement for the public review period and information centres was placed in the Wawatay News.

March 6 – 8, 2007: Information centres were held in Sioux Lookout, Pickle Lake and Savant Lake.

Summary of comments received during review period:

- Canoe routes on planning maps should be consistent with forest management planning resources uses values maps.
- The Canoe Route Direction for the 2008-2018 Caribou Forest Management Plan should undergo a public review separate from the St. Raphael Signature Site or the 2008-2018 Caribou Forest FMP Plan.
- St. Raphael Provincial Park canoe routes should not be treated in isolation to connecting Crown land canoe routes.
- Concerns about conflicting objectives in the St. Raphael Signature Site
- Harvesting and road building need to be deferred in all caribou habitat until the Provincial Caribou Recovery Strategy and Action Plans are completed.
- Road restrictions must be strengthened if the St. Raphael Signature Site is to maintain its important remote characteristics
- Blanket timing restriction are overly constraining on operations and go beyond what is required
- Access to the EMA is too restrictive

APPENDIX C: ROAD AND TRAIL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Access management considerations and careful access planning in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area will be important to support the goal for the EMA, as well as the vision for the greater signature site. Below is a list detailing specific information that will be required in a proposal for a new road or trail, or in a trail relocation application, in the EMA. Through standard access planning and application processes (e.g., forest management planning; work permit to build a trap-line trail) the following points must be considered and documented:

- purpose of road or trail (including type of use)
- location of road or trail (include map)
- location in relationship to other existing roads or trails
- season of use
- anticipated term of use
- standard of road/trail (i.e., width of travel surface, width of right-of-way; surface material)
- stream crossing requirements/structures
- impacts on unique values
- potential effects on remote characteristics
- impacts on other signature site users
- mitigation efforts
- anticipated maintenance requirements
- deactivation plan
- use management strategy

This information will be reviewed by the Ministry of Natural Resources in consideration of existing legislation and policy. Road and trail information will be held in the ministry's database. Sensitive information will not be made available to the public.

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines affirm the mineral exploration industry's commitment to sustainable development, a concept that requires balancing the need for economic growth with good stewardship in the protection of human health and the natural environment. The guidelines offer practical methods and best practices which, when applied, will ensure that an exploration project is carried out with the lowest levels of disturbance possible to its natural surroundings within Enhanced Management Areas (EMA's). The suggested guidelines do not take precedence over Ontario statutes and regulations but rather comply with them by providing standard procedures for maintaining good environmental practice at the various stages in the exploration process.

Explorationists should ensure that they have an up to date EMA Values Maps for the EMA within which they are conducting exploration activities. EMA Values Maps will be provided to the explorationist by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). The exploration community should ensure that they identify any natural heritage, recreational, fish and wildlife, tourism or forestry (e.g., plantation) values within their exploration area of interest. By following the suggested guidelines contained herein, members of the Ontario exploration industry may carry out their work in the search for new wealth in enhanced management areas with confidence that they are doing so in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Observe the following points in the management of your exploration program:

1. Be aware of the three R's of exploration and practice them at every stage of your exploration program **RESPECT** the environment in which you work. **REFRAIN** from unnecessarily disturbing the natural environment. **RESTORE** the natural setting of areas where you have worked.

2. Ensure that workers are familiar with environmental protection measures and industrial hygiene requirements. Make sure that they are aware of regulatory requirements and environmental codes and are also properly trained to carry out any procedures pertaining to environmentally related situations.

3. In the event of a proposed program of advanced exploration under Part 7 of the *Mining Act*, conduct environmental baseline studies, consisting of water, soil and, if necessary, lake bottom sampling, prior to any major disturbance of the natural surroundings. These baseline data are essential for the monitoring of the property during its later development.

4. Ensure that your exploration program is designed and budgeted to take into account all potential sensitivities associated with fish and fish habitat, wildlife, downstream water users, marshes and wetlands, native lands, archaeological sites and all other Crown land values and

user groups. Be aware that exploration activities undertaken in or close to marshes, bogs, lakes, streams and rivers require special care and planning. Communication with the District Biologist

at the local MNR office is strongly recommended.

Observe the following procedures and practices during each stage of your exploration program.

Field Reconnaissance

1. Be familiar with all statutes, regulations, amendments, and guidelines governing all aspects of mineral exploration in the area in which you are working. In the event of proposed activities that exceed allowable disturbances under Part 7 of the Mining Act, consult with the Mineral Development Coordinator, MNDM. Before the start of an advanced exploration program, ensure that all necessary permits have been acquired and are in place. Be aware of the location of all natural heritage, recreational, fish and wildlife, tourism or forestry (e.g., plantation) values in the area of your proposed work operations. These are found on the EMA Values Maps as supplied through the Resident Geologist Office and the office of the Regional Land Use Geologist, MNDM, in cooperation with the MNR. Ensure that you have a copy of the EMA Values Map for your area even if you have not been contacted.

2. Ensure that all employees, including contractors, stakers etc. hired for an exploration project, are trained in and knowledgeable about identification of sensitive natural values, environmental

protection measures and industrial hygiene requirements. Make sure that they are familiar with regulatory requirements and environmental codes and are properly trained to carry out procedures pertaining to environmental protection and remediation.

3. Ensure that contractors and subcontractors know their responsibilities and liabilities and that they discharge their duties correctly.

4. Minimize disturbance to forestry plantation areas by respecting fences and gates. Observe all signs posted by landowners, forestry licence holders and respect the rights of others.

5. Avoid unnecessary disturbance of vegetation and wildlife. Keep vehicles on established roads whenever possible. Obtain permission and guidance from landowners or forest licence holders when travel to off-road sites is necessary.

6. In principle, carry out what you carry in. Use proper receptacles for refuse and try to leave an area cleaner than it was upon your arrival. With proper approvals, reusable items such as lumber, frames, floors, etc., may be neatly piled and stored at the site.

7. Check for local MNR regulations governing the lighting of fires. The lighting of fires may be prohibited at certain times of the year. Ensure that appropriate fire fighting equipment in quantities appropriate to the number of personnel and type of activity is available on site.

8. Ensure that temporary work camps are located, constructed and operated in such a way that they will have the minimum impact on the environment. Always keep camps neat, orderly, safe and clean and in accordance with local regulations.

9. Avoid any disturbance to community watersheds, fisheries habitat, upwellings and spawning beds by familiarizing yourself with their location. Do not operate vehicles or heavy equipment in streams or on stream or pond banks. Keep to a minimum any clearing, grubbing, excavating or other surface disturbances near streams and ponds. If such activity is proposed, preserve a natural buffer zone of undisturbed natural vegetation at least 10 metres wide or wider at the water's edge to prevent siltation. If in doubt, contact your local MNR Biologist.

10. Handle all fuel and hazardous materials with care and avoid spills by ensuring that they are stored properly. Control any spills and/or leaks by establishing berms around storage containment areas and by placing water pumps and portable operating equipment in metal drip trays. In the event of a spill, notify the Ministry of the Environment and MNR as soon as possible.

11. Use on-site field vehicles and equipment for exploration activities only. Avoid unnecessary disturbance to nearby residents and wildlife.

Property Acquisition

1. Investigate and understand the current status of surface and mineral rights before you take action to acquire a property. Be familiar with those regulations and mining laws governing the acquisition of property as outlined in the *Ontario Mining Act*. Be familiar with the *Ontario Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* provisions for withdrawal from staking of lands intended for new parks and conservation reserves.

2. Be aware of all regulations and laws relating to environmental liabilities before you acquire a property that has been previously mined, explored and/or developed. Consider documenting the

environmental condition of the property at the time of acquisition with field notes and photographs.

3. Avoid any misunderstanding with surface rights owners by discussing your presence and plans in the area with them once you have acquired mineral rights. Ascribe to the notification and compensation requirements of Sections 78 and 79 of the *Mining Act*. Maintain a cordial relationship with local residents and keep them informed during the course of your program.

Campsites

1. Be familiar with and comply with all statutes, regulations, amendments and permit requirements governing the operation of campsites. A temporary encampment may be erected on a mining claim for the purpose of conducting mineral exploration activities. If the campsite is not located on a mining claim, the maximum allowable time for resident camping on crown land is 21 days.

2. Locate your campsite away from watercourses and maintain it in a neat and orderly fashion.

3. Provide sewage treatment facilities capable of servicing the resident and visiting camp population. Ensure that pit privies, conventional septic tank/tile bed systems, and packaged sewage treatment plants are designed, installed, and, where necessary, disposed of in accordance with local regulations. Consult with the local health unit for details.

4. Select and use products that pose the least threat to the environment. Re-use containers as much as possible and whenever appropriate. Ensure that all products, which are recyclable, are taken to a recycling facility.

5. Compost organic kitchen waste. Remove inorganic domestic waste to approved municipal sites, to an approved landfill for the camp, or to a recycling facility. In regions populated by bears, establish a special containment system for kitchen wastes.

6. Confine fuels, lube oils and greases during storage and transportation. Ensure that used oil facilities are established at all permanent sites and are regularly monitored. Collect and remove hazardous substances used in machinery (such as batteries) to designated disposal facilities.

7. Provide proper first aid and fire protection equipment at the camp and make sure that the equipment complies with current regulations.

8. Make every effort to avoid attracting wildlife to the camp.

9. At the end of operations, dismantle campsites that are to be abandoned. Leave campsites that are to be used for future operations in a clean and tidy condition. Bury organic waste and remove all other refuse from the site, taking advantage of recycling facilities as much as possible. Backfill all pits in accordance with local regulations. Where possible, rip up a site that is to be abandoned to break surface compaction and allow natural revegetation to take place.

10. Avoid impacting on natural heritage, recreational, fish and wildlife, tourism or forestry (e.g., plantation) values as defined by the Ontario MNR on EMA Values Maps, as supplied by the Resident Geologist Office, MNDM.

Road Building and Access

1. Consult with your local MNR office and initiate Work Permit process for new road construction (requiring roadbed improvement). Be sensitive to the needs of other land users; for example, tourist lodges and resort operators. Trail construction for access to mineral exploration workings (no road bed improvement and under 3 metres in width) does not require a Work Permit.

2. Plan and locate roads and trails to maximum advantage for your operations but with minimum levels of construction and disturbance. Take advantage of landform and vegetation to screen road locations whenever possible. Avoid impacting on all values defined on EMA Values Maps supplied by the Ontario MNR.

3. Clear right-of-way timber and debris in an orderly manner. Dispose of debris by a) burning, if permitted; b) burying in offroad push piles, if practicable or c) in a manner prescribed by local regulations. Whenever possible, stack commercial timber so that it can be harvested by pulp or timber companies. Consult with the licensed forest operator in the area prior to constructing your road or trail.

4. Provide for erosion and surface water control by installing culverts, bridges, waterbars, and ditches, whenever necessary. Keep insloping to a minimum, and provide for frequent water diversions off the road when necessary. Remove all unnecessary berms from road edges.

5. Develop a reclamation plan following the detailed road construction guidelines and Work Permit requirements.

6. Avoid impacting on natural heritage, recreational, fish and wildlife, tourism or forestry (e.g., plantation) values as defined by the Ontario MNR on EMA Values Maps, as supplied by the Resident Geologist Office, MNDM.

Geological, Geochemical and Geophysical Surveys

1. Avoid unnecessary brush cutting and blazing of trees while laying out grid lines. Cut grid lines at the minimum width possible.

2. Upon completion of a survey, remove any wire and other extraneous material that may endanger the lives of birds and other wildlife.

3. Avoid contaminating soil and water during the course of your work.

4. Avoid impacting on natural heritage, recreational, fish and wildlife, tourism or forestry (e.g., plantation) values as defined by the Ontario MNR on EMA Values Maps, as supplied by the Resident Geologist Office, MNDM.

Trenching and Stripping

1. Avoid any disturbance to community watersheds, fisheries habitat, upwellings and spawning beds by familiarizing yourself with their location. Do not operate vehicles or heavy equipment in streams or on stream or pond banks. Keep to a minimum any clearing, grubbing, excavating or other surface disturbances near streams and ponds. If such activity is proposed, preserve a natural buffer zone of undisturbed natural vegetation at least 10 metres wide or wider at the water's edge to prevent siltation. If in doubt, contact your local MNR Biologist.

2. Clear timber and debris in an orderly manner. Dispose of debris by a) burning, if permitted; b) by burying it in off-road push piles, if practicable or c) in a manner prescribed by local regulation.

Whenever possible, stack commercial timber so that it can be harvested by pulp or timber companies. Consult with the licensed forest operator in the area prior to constructing your road or trail.

3. Backfill, cover and revegetate all excavations and other surface disturbances that have not exposed reusable geological information such as outcrop. Avoid excessive stripping by using backhoes or excavators rather than bulldozers whenever possible.

4. If your proposed area of stripping exceeds an area 10,000m^2 or is within 100 metres of a waterbody and exceeds an area of 2,500m^2, you must file a closure plan under Part 7 of the Mining Act. Contact the Mineral Development Coordinator at the MNDM.

5. Avoid impacting on natural heritage, recreational, fish and wildlife, tourism or forestry (e.g., plantation) values as defined by the Ontario MNR on EMA Values Maps, as supplied by the Resident Geologist Office, MNDM.

Drilling

1. Ensure that drilling company workers under contract are aware of current environmental regulations and will comply with them in the course of their work. Clearly define all environmental and industrial hygiene responsibilities, duties and liabilities of the contractor in contractors' agreements.

2. Keep to a minimum any noise pollution produced by equipment.

3. Ensure that contractors avoid impacting on natural heritage, recreational, fish and wildlife, tourism or forestry (e.g., plantation) values as defined by the Ontario MNR on EMA Values Maps, as supplied by the Resident Geologist Office, MNDM.

4. Locate drill sites and water lines in areas where access to them and their operation will create the least amount of disturbance. Take advantage of local landform and vegetation to screen drilling activities whenever possible.

5. Eliminate the need for elaborate access roads by using the smallest size of drilling equipment and drill holes that will ensure an adequate sampling of the target that you are seeking.

6. Ensure that proper receptacles for debris are provided and used at drill sites, and that sites are cleaned up as soon as equipment has been removed.

7. Do not allow drilling wastes to run uncontrolled over land or ice surfaces or into watercourses. Recycle as much drilling mud and water as possible by using tanks or sumps.

8. Avoid wasting water by installing and using shut-off valves when water lines are not in use.

9. Use biodegradable materials whenever possible.

10. Keep on site oil-absorbent material and/or oil booms (depending on the amounts of fuel stored) for use in the event of a spill.

11. Upon completion of drilling, remove the drill casing and cap or plug the drill hole.

Abandonment of Exploration Activity

1. Outslope and remove all berms from roads no longer needed, and install appropriate water barriers and other erosion control structures. Remove culverts, low bridges and other structures

that may cause blockage or unwanted diversion of watercourses.

2. Backfill and grade all open excavations such as exploration trenches, adits and shaft waste dumps as close to the original contour as possible. Grade to contour or smooth out drill sites, building sites, roads, or other major disturbances resulting from construction during the exploration program.

3. Cap or plug drill holes and close or otherwise make safe from unauthorized entry, all tunnels, shafts and other openings. Make sure that procedures on site abandonment contained in Part 7 of the Mining Act have been correctly followed.

4. Remove all trash and other foreign material from the exploration area and dispose of in an approved waste disposal site.

5. Where possible and at the proper time of the year, revegetate all disturbed surface areas by planting trees which are suitable for the area. In addition or as an alternative, prepare the disturbed surfaces in a way that will encourage maximum natural revegetation.

6. Inspect gates and fences used for access to ensure that they have not been damaged.

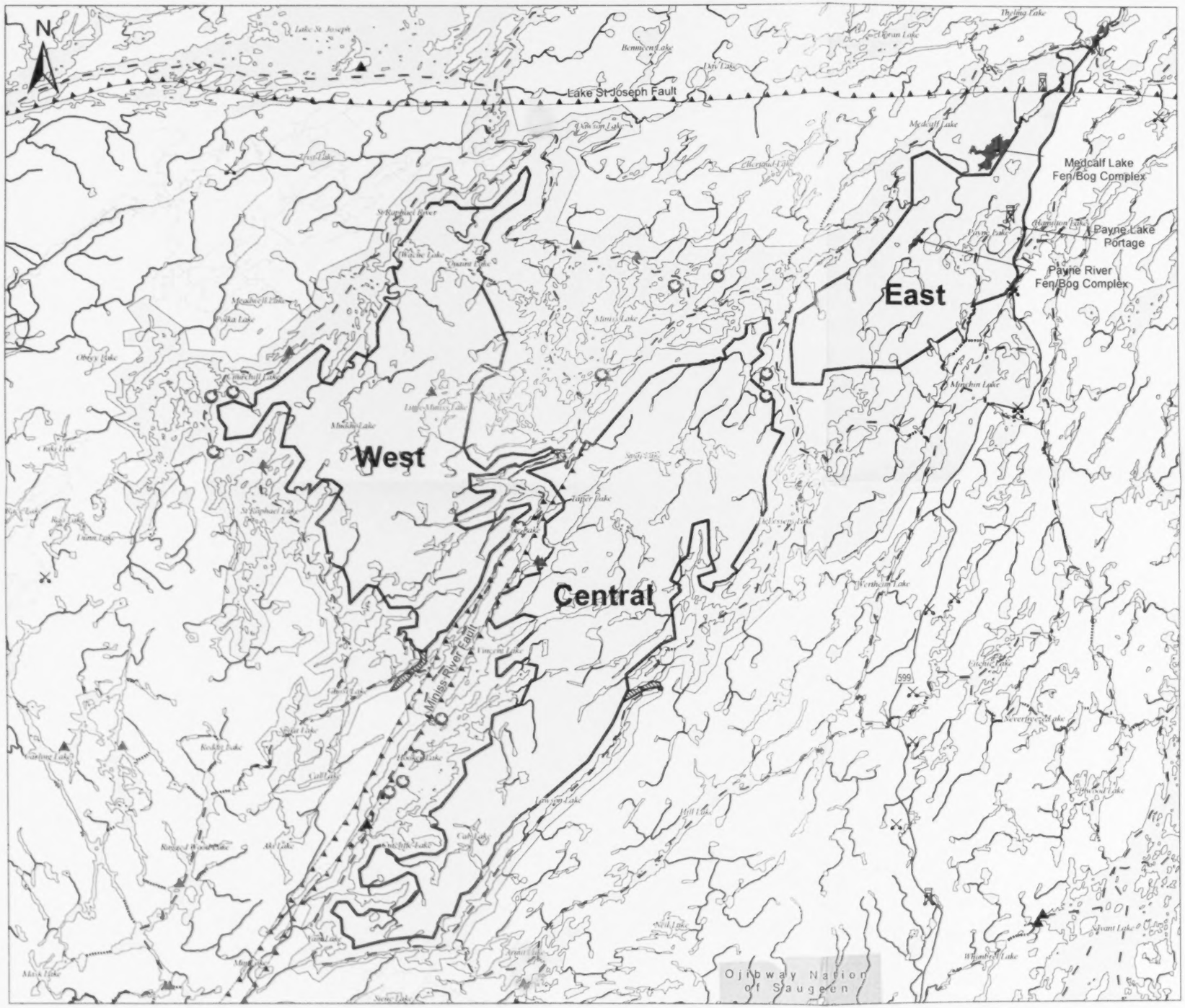
7. When abandoning exploration sites in claim-staked areas close to settled areas, remove any physical evidence of work such as ribbons and pickets. Be aware that most jurisdictions do not allow staking posts or survey monuments to be removed.

8. Advise local residents, landowners, native groups and government officials that you are abandoning the site.

9. Avoid impacting on natural heritage, recreational, fish and wildlife, tourism or forestry (e.g., plantation) values as defined by the Ontario MNR on EMA Values Maps, as supplied by the Resident Geologist Office, MNDM.

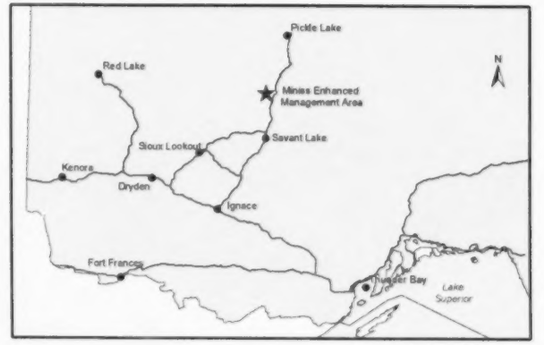
(Modified after the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada Guidelines for Exploration Practice, 1998)

MAP 1



Miniss Enhanced Management Area

Ontario



Legend

- Mainbase Lodge/Outpost - Crownland
- Mainbase Lodge/Outpost - Patent Land
- Pit/Quarry
- Tower
- Significant Life Science Values; Red Pine Stand
- Fault
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Tertiary Road
- Canoe Route
- Portage
- Significant/Rare Wetland Community
- First Nations
- Selected Industry Access Point
- Miniss Enhanced Management Area
- St Raphael Provincial Park

1:250,000

Kilometres

0 1 2 4 6 8 10

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This map is illustrative only. Do not rely on it as being a precise indicator of routes, locations of features, nor as a guide to navigation.

Projection: UTM Zone 15
Datum: NAD83
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